BUILDING A CONTEXT FOR SUCCESS:

COMMUNITIES, FAMILIES, AND SCHOOLS

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Schools and their Community Context

Challenges and Opportunities Outside the School

> **...[S]chools and teachers alone seldom help students achieve their full academic potential. This is not an indictment of schools or teachers. Rather, this is a fact of child development.[1]**

The importance of schools' attention to events in other settings. That schools cannot deliver education by themselves is indeed a fundamental fact on which to ground educational policy. Events outside the school are an important part of the educational "curriculum" for children and youth. Hence, to be successful in fulfilling their own mission, schools must pay attention to phenomena that many people, including many professionals in education, may regard as beyond the scope of education per se. *Paying attention* in this context means:

- being sensitive to the social and economic realities of students' lives (in effect, *noticing* differences);
- *adapting* to those realities (in effect, both *individualizing* instruction and *integrating* school life with that in the community as a whole);
- systematically *using* community resources, and
- sometimes directly *assisting* communities and families (a) so that they are better able to provide an optimal educational environment for the children within them and (b) so that the goal of lifelong learning is more easily fulfilled.

At an individual level, the principle of the significance of external influences on education was succinctly stated by an influential panel of the National Academies of Science as the first of three general findings about *How People Learn*:

> Students come to the classroom with preconceptions about how the world works. If their initial understanding is not engaged, they may fail to grasp the new concepts and information, or they may learn them for purposes of a test but revert to their preconceptions outside the classroom.[2]

The panel could also have stated this principle in positive terms. The Committee could have written the principle as follows:

> From the very beginning of their lives, "children are...wired for feelings and ready to learn."[3] Building from their "intrinsic human desire to explore and master [their] environment,"[4] children bring with them a wealth of experience and knowledge inculcated by parents, grandparents, parents' friends, children's own peers, youth group leaders, coaches, and religious educators,[5] or generated through their own observations and experiences. If educators do not capitalize on children's initial understanding of how the world works, opportunities will be lost to generalize from such externally acquired knowledge to the classroom and back again. Opportunities may also be lost to engage adults outside the school who are allies in enhancing the child's education.

Of course, both of these statements are correct. *Readiness* is usually viewed as an attribute of children and, less frequently, their families. As the National Education Goals Panel recognized, however, *ready schools* are critical in students' successfully making the transition from home to school (and vice versa).[6] Schools must be ready both to address the gaps or inaccuracies that children may have in the knowledge base that educators commonly expect and to build on the foundation that home and community partnerships provide.

The Baltimore Beginning School Study. This principle has been vividly illustrated in an important long-term program of research undertaken by a Johns Hopkins University research team. For a generation, Doris Entwisle and her colleagues have been following 800 individuals (approximately one-half African American and one-half White) who were first graders in the Baltimore public schools in 1982.[7] There was considerable variation in their families' social class. About 30% of the African American children and 21% of the White children had a parent who had attended college, but two-thirds of the children (about three-fourths of the African Americans and one-half of the Whites) were eligible for subsidized lunches.

The result of this longitudinal study have been stunning. Entwisle et al. found that first grade performance was related to social class, that marks in first grade (controlling for demographic variables and test performance) strongly predicted much later school performance (including high school dropout),[8] and that the class-based discrepancy in educational achievement grew across the elementary school years. However, the educational disadvantage that children from low-income families had at the start of school was attenuated if they had relatively strong work habits (e.g., discernible interest in classroom work) or relatively strong attention at home (e.g., the presence of a grandmother in the home, if the child had a single parent). So one remarkable finding has been that *the success of the transition to elementary school has lifelong consequences*—a finding that is particularly notable because that transition, unlike the move from elementary school to middle school or junior high, has received little attention from researchers, policymakers, and grantsmakers.

Entwisle et al.'s even more striking finding, however, was that, across school careers, achievement during the school year as measured by standardized tests did not vary by social class. Rather, *the class-based inequality in educational outcomes that grows during children's school careers is based on the discrepancy in test performance that exists when children enter school, a discrepancy that grows every summer—NOT during the academic year*. Nonetheless, children in the Baltimore studies were judged on the basis of their total achievement, not just what happened during the school year. Therefore, disadvantaged children were much more likely to be perceived negatively by both parents and teachers, to receive failing marks, to be retained in grade, etc.

Indeed, whole schools were subject to such condemnation. Even though children in schools that were comprised almost exclusively of disadvantaged children learned as much in an academic year (as measured by standardized tests) as did schools that were comprised

almost exclusively of middle-class children, children in the former schools generally received poor grades, thus confirming the low expectations that teachers and parents had for them.

There are a number of important implications of Entwisle et al.'s remarkable research program. Prof. Entwisle's own primary concern has been the debilitating effect of the erroneous belief that the problem of disadvantaged children's poor school performance lies primarily within the classroom:

> A major way to improve the school climate in poor neighborhoods would be to correct the mistaken public perception that elementary schools are falling down on the job. Children's families and the public at large need to be made aware that the deficits in school performance of children who are poor are not linked to school attendance. *Elementary schools are promoting just as much growth in achievement of children who are poor as in children who are better off.* Schools are doing a much better job than they have been credited with. The importance of the success of schools in fostering development of young children irrespective of their home backgrounds is hard to overstate. Schools have undeservedly become the target to blame for most of society's intractable problems.[9]

Of course, the cost of this allocation of responsibility in teacher morale, although serious,[10] is not the matter of greatest concern. Rather, in a community with a high and persistent concentration of economic poverty (and, as we shall see, in a society in which social poverty has become common even in communities of privilege, especially among young people), a low sense of collective efficacy (the belief that the community can act effectively to improve and maintain families' quality of life) is a reasonable, even if regrettable, cornerstone of one's worldview. Given the centrality of a neighborhood school in a community's identity, its definition as a failure is apt not only to discourage economic investment in the community but also substantially to raise the risk of diminution of parents' psychological investment in their

community and their family. Tragically, such a situation is made to order for increased social problems, especially those most directly affecting children.

Even if such terrible indirect effects do not occur, the focus on the schools' purported failure in basic instruction deflects from attention to the points that empirically are most significant. Indeed, Entwisle et al.'s findings strongly suggest that the emphases of school re-structuring in the past two decades have been largely misplaced. The Baltimore Beginning School Study provides powerful evidence that *the primary source of class-related variation in educational achievement lies outside the classroom*. Most obviously, the findings imply that careful attention should be given to enrichment of children's summertime experiences. When, though, have education reformers focused their efforts on design of summer activities for families and communities?

As the rhetorical question illustrates, to say that the action is outside the classroom does not mean that it is outside the province of the schools. Further, it does not mean that the schools have succeeded in fulfilling their core mission. It does imply, to the contrary, that substantially greater systematic attention should be given to facilitation of educational experiences in the community. Schools may encourage other entities to take such action, or the schools may act on their own. In either case, however, *schools should assume responsibility for ensuring that families, especially those who are most disadvantaged, have the resources necessary to enable children to continue their educational growth during the summer at the pace that occurs during the academic year.*

In the same vein, in order to reduce the disadvantage with which poor children begin first grade, *schools should promote the development of universally available, high-quality preschool programs.*[11] After an extensive review of the research literature, a panel of the National Academies concluded that a "substantial body of empirical evidence indicates [that...model] preschool programs have prevented grade repetition and special education placements for

disadvantaged children over the long term."[12] Longitudinal outcome evaluations of preschool programs have shown both educational (e.g., improved achievement test scores; less frequent retention in grade) and social effects (e.g., reduced delinquency) that persist at least into adolescence.[13] Such long-term effects can be found at least when the programs have small classes, a low teacher-pupil ratio, a curriculum focusing directly on children's cognitive development, and an expectation, with appropriate school and community support, of direct and heavy involvement by parents.

Although such research provides considerable reason for optimism about the nation's capacity to resolve or at least mitigate some of the most vexing problems that the schools face, it also gives reason for caution. Less well-funded preschool programs generally do not provide the range of educational opportunities that the model programs have, and they have typically not fared as well in evaluation studies.[14] In that regard*, the trend toward treating early childhood education as simply a downward extension of public-school academic programs is also misguided, in that a lack of socialization activities because of a substitution of direct instruction may reduce children's social-skill acquisition and increase their anxiety without improving their cognitive development.*[15] It is also important to avoid the simplistic idea that even model preschool programs can "vaccinate" children against the pernicious effects of decades of disadvantage. Although the trend in developmental research has been toward ever-widening discovery of competencies of young children,[16] the common belief that learning is distinctively a task of childhood, especially early childhood, is largely erroneous.[17] *The positive long-term effects of model preschool programs are much stronger if critical components are delivered on BOTH sides of the transition from home to elementary school.*[18] Further, primary-grade enrichment programs themselves have long-term positive effects even when the pupils did not have a model preschool education.[19]

In general, *family literacy should be a central focus of the schools.* This emphasis should include both (a) direct assistance to parents in their role as children's first and perhaps foremost teachers and (b) indirect help through promotion of community expressions of concern and support for children and their families.[20] In fulfilling these objectives, perhaps the schools often *are* failing. If that is the case, however, the lapse is at least in part because of the particular tasks to which they have often been urged or even mandated to give primary or even complete attention.

In that regard, although there are remarkable exceptions in which schools have become true centers of community,[21] schools typically have far to go in making their own settings welcoming to parents and other adult family members.[22] Even when that is accomplished, however, respected educators have a responsibility to ascend the community pulpit to dispel myths about the factors involved in children's achievement and their parents' involvement in their education. Professional educators and other leaders in the field (e.g., school board members) can do much to persuade not only their colleagues but also the general public about the importance of a family- and community-oriented approach to education.

A Matter of Influence

> **...[T]he big message of research on parent involvement in the schools is that the barriers to parents' participation are to a large extent within the control of schools. The school itself has substantially greater influence on parent involvement than do parent characteristics....**
>
> **The most important leverage point in increasing parental involvement is teachers' own worldviews.... [W]hether teachers are effective in involving parents appears to be based largely on whether they psychologically "write off" parents as likely not to take a positive and significant role in their children's education. Whether parents demonstrate a sense of efficacy in regard to their role as partners in education is dependent in large part on whether teachers demonstrate a sense of efficacy in regard to their side of the home-school partnership. Teachers who are leaders in use of parent involvement—for example, those who frequently contact parents—rarely make stereotypic judgments about low-income, poorly educated, or single parents....**

> **In essence, teachers who engage parents successfully are those who adopt a parental analogue of a "zero-reject" policy for children. Such teachers believe that parents want to be involved in the schools, they regard such involvement as an important element in the school program, and they actively seek parental involvement in multiple and varied ways, including ways that do not require physical presence in the school building.[23]**

The Hopkins research is especially useful because it identifies the leverage points for dealing with the problem of socioeconomic inequality in educational outcomes. In that regard, some social and economic goals that policymakers and the public may set for schools are unrealistic. Some problems that are often conceived to be primarily educational are in fact deeply rooted in social and economic structures and processes. Even global forces may be at work. For example, it is implausible that schools in towns that are dependent on textile manufacturing will be able to do much to forestall the loss of jobs to East Asia or Latin America. Similarly, when poverty is concentrated in a particular geographic area,[24] schools—and, perhaps more to the point, students and their families themselves face—a steeply uphill battle.[25]

This valid specific point is overgeneralized, however, in the common belief that schools' ability to fulfill their principal functions is constrained—or, in "good" settings, facilitated—by the communities of which they are a part. Good schools are thought to be the product of good neighborhoods. High educational achievement occurs, it is believed, when children's families and neighborhoods are successful—when families and communities are stable, safe, and productive, with a high standard of living. In this view, students' achievement is effectively preordained by their social circumstances, and the life within schools mirrors that within the surrounding community.

By implication, schools are often conceived as fundamentally conservative institutions that merely reinforce the existing social order within and among communities—in effect, ensuring that the rich and the poor, the privileged and the disadvantaged, the powerful and the voiceless remain so across generations. Regardless of whether such a result is intended, so

the argument goes, it is in fact what happens. In that sense, schools fail when they allow students to slip below the achievement level that is believed to be commensurate with their socioeconomic status. This perspective is illustrated by the brouhaha that commonly emerges when children in a "good" neighborhood are newly assigned to a school that is located in a less affluent community and that has proportionately more students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Such an intuitive viewpoint emphasizing the constraints on education may often co-exist paradoxically with the naïve definition of social issues as primarily matters of education, whether at the individual or community level. Thus, for example, racial or class discrimination often—but usually mistakenly—is conceived as primarily the product of "not knowing any better."[26] Similarly, problems of public health may long be inadequately addressed because of the typically misguided assumption that, if only people were educated about risks to their health, they would behave wisely.[27]

The tendency to overemphasize motivational and cognitive causes of behavior (and to underemphasize situational factors) is so widespread that it has long been known in psychology as the *fundamental attribution error.*[28] This problem goes well beyond the obvious overreaching embedded in the assumption that education is the means by which poverty can be eliminated.[29] For example, a typical assumption is that child maltreatment is the product of gaps in parents' knowledge and skills.[30] Consequently, parent education is the most common approach to prevention and treatment programs intended to increase children's safety.[31] However, there is virtually no foundation for this approach. Most of the variation in child maltreatment rates is accounted for by community financial and social capital—whether parents have the material resources needed to provide care for their children,[32] and whether they have sufficiently strong connections with neighbors, co-workers, etc. that they know that they can count on others for help (e.g., emergency child care) as needed.[33]

Accordingly, as centers of community, schools may have important roles in enhancing parents' care for their children, but the strategies that are most likely to be helpful are almost certain *not* to be didactic.[34] Rather, schools' effectiveness in strengthening families is apt to be based on their success in fostering parents' belief that they (and other parents in the community) can make a difference in their families' well-being.[35] Such a sense of parental efficacy prevents both withdrawal from child care (in effect, neglect) because of a sense of helplessness or lashing out in frustration (as may occur in physical abuse).[36] Therefore, *schools seeking to ensure that children have safe and stimulating home learning environments are advised to promote meaningful parental participation not only in the schools but also in other community institutions*[37] *and, as in full-service schools,*[38] *to facilitate parents' access to both material and social resources that make child rearing easier.*[39]

Schools interested in maximizing the cost-effectiveness of their expenditures of fiscal and human resources should not invest in conventional didactic programs of parent education. Such an approach is easy and cheap to implement. It may even match intuition as the obvious step to take, given the common assumption that many parents are inept or at least thoughtless in childrearing. However, the root problem in parent-child relations is rarely a gap in knowledge.[40]

Social science research has shown that some purportedly formidable or even insurmountable external challenges to school personnel actually are weak or non-existent. Thus, for example, social and economic disadvantage undeniably provide significant challenges, but *schools nonetheless have substantial control over the engagement of communities and families and, therefore, students themselves in the educational enterprise.* Contrary to the belief of many educators and the general public, parent participation in their children's education is only weakly related to parents' own education, profession, or social class.[41] Parents' involvement is more closely related to what they *do* than who they *are*,[42] and

what they do in regard to their children's schooling is heavily influenced by their children's teachers' expectations.[43] Teachers' efforts to involve parents in diverse ways[44] typically bear fruit, no matter the parents' backgrounds.[45] Whether teachers do facilitate such participation relates in substantial part to their beliefs about the parents of their students.[46] Further, when parents are engaged in their children's education, the children perform better in school,[47] regardless of the students' grade level.[48]

It is true that (a) the frequency with which parents read to their young children or take them to the library and (b) the likelihood that they enroll the children in a center-based preschool program are highly related to parental education and income.[49] On the other hand, it is also true that the variance within social-class groups is greater than the variance among them. Hence, family process (support for learning; interaction style) is about 2½ times more powerful than family structure and social class in explaining children's achievement.[50] In short, although the challenges are great for low-income families in finding the time, energy, and dollars to provide educational resources for their children (and for schools in generating such resources in the community), many low-income parents do find the wherewithal (or have social and material support available) to do so.

Similarly, *school safety is largely unrelated to the crime rate in the surrounding community*, although the latter does affect the risk to children on the way to and from school.[51] Regardless of the neighborhoods in which they are located, safe schools are simply well-run schools—settings in which rules are clear, reasonable, consensually generated, and consistently applied and in which both teachers and students believe that what they say is heard and given due attention.[52] It is unsurprising, therefore, that *the most effective strategies for preventing school violence involve re-shaping school norms and facilitating adult supervision*,[53] not curricular approaches (e.g., teaching conflict-resolution skills) or other limited corrective measures such as group counseling or peer mediation.[54]

In this report, the discussion of the relation between schools and communities focuses primarily on circumstances in which schools can make a difference—in effect, major social goals that the schools have the capacity to achieve in the foreseeable future (hence, e.g., not "ending poverty" but instead "bringing people, regardless of their material wealth, into meaningful roles in civic life"). This categorization itself has two elements. First, a key question may be how schools *adapt* to the social and economic factors affecting education. Can the schools influence or at least mediate the operation of such variables so that education is facilitated or at least not harmed? Second, another question of concern may be whether the schools themselves can *change*. That is, apart from the schools' own mission of education in the narrow sense (i.e., imparting knowledge), can they contribute to other social goals (e.g., reducing racial discrimination)?

In both instances, however, even if the schools in principle have the capacity to respond effectively, a problem may be the constraints imposed by prevailing ideologies. Because of the role of schools in enabling children to be or become full participants in their communities, educational policy often touches on some of the most basic problems in moral and political philosophy: what we conceive childhood to be, and what we want children to become. Thus, the issues of concern are fundamental questions of the current, desired, and potential nature of the social order.

The Importance of Cultural Themes

> **...In discussions of education policy in recent years, a common theme has been the supposed need to return to the basics. A particular twist on this theme is the assertion, often posed by educators themselves, that the *schools* have been asked to do too much. The schools have been asked, so the argument goes, to integrate the society, reduce racial, class, and gender prejudice, increase workers' productivity, prevent crime, and so forth.**
>
> **The point is misplaced. Perhaps we have asked—indeed demanded—our *children* to do too much....The use of children as the infantry in the battle for social change is derived from a mythology of**

> **childhood. Children often are perceived as especially malleable. Indeed, some believe, erroneously, that young children are the only humans capable of substantial change. Therefore, so the argument goes, if change is to occur, children must bear its burden.[55]**

Sometimes paradoxically, the schools are often thought to provide the vectors for social change, in part because children are regarded as the key audience in implementing social change. Despite the conservatism that some ascribe to schools, education is also widely perceived to be transformative. At the family level, formal education is regarded as the ticket to social and economic mobility. At the community level, an improvement in the schools' capacity to educate students for technical and professional careers may be the first step toward recruitment of higher-paying industries and, therefore, enhancement of median income.

Public schools' role as the instrument for expression of emerging social values was illustrated most dramatically, of course, by the desegregation of the schools. Although Jim Crow laws touched almost every aspect of Southern life, there can be no doubt that the battle for racial equality, especially in its early years, was—and perhaps largely still is—waged primarily in the schools. In the same vein, schools were in the vanguard in the movements to bring people with disabilities into the mainstream and to increase opportunities for women and girls.

Although the use of the schools to eliminate inequities and to remedy their effects is particularly fundamental, the list of societal goals that schools are already required to address or that some federal or state legislators would like them to embrace is of course much broader—everything from character development to chastity to debt management to firearms safety to gender equality to highway safety to music appreciation to parental competence to sobriety to volunteerism. For example, the current concern with the high prevalence of obesity in the United States[56] has led to numerous proposals (some of them enacted) for changes in educational policy and practice—e.g., strengthening of nutrition education; healthier school-

lunch menus; regulation of vending machines on school grounds; greater frequency and rigor of physical education classes; regular weigh-ins and corollary personal and school report cards on children's conformance with government standards for "normal" body weight.

The agenda that is laid at the schools' door reflects societal beliefs and attitudes about the nature of childhood and family life. Not only are children a captive audience in the public schools, but they (unlike their parents or grandparents) also are regarded as impressionable and thus the target audience of choice for almost any social reform. This preference is intensified by the fact that conversion of a political issue into a *valence issue* (in political scientists' terms, an issue for which only one side is socially acceptable) makes it undiscussable. This tendency is the foundation for politicians' attempting to frame many issues that have wider scope (e.g., the size of the federal debt) as children's issues.[57] This approach has the effect of nearly constant widening of the policy issues that are considered to be "children's issues" and thus that schools are expected to address.

Further *heightening the demands—but limiting the schools' own response—is the unfortunate dramatic growth in the past generation in adults' beliefs that young people are out of control and that the reason for this misbehavior is parental neglect or ineptitude*. In a survey of American adults in 2003, the majority who replied to a query about the one or two words that would "describe kids these days" gave negative answers (e.g., "spoiled"; "disrespectful"; "wild"; "troubled";

"lazy"; "brats").[58] Answering an open-ended question, most of the respondents indicated that the thing that "children most need help with in this country today" was discipline, parental supervision, or moral training,[59] and 58% indicated that "most" or "all" children in the United States today are "at risk."[60] In another survey that was conducted a few years earlier (1999), two-thirds of American adults indicated that parents today are doing a worse job in childrearing than did parents 20 years before, but only 4% saw improvement.[61] Moreover, children are

almost the only demographic group (farmers are the other) for whom American adults believe that life has deteriorated since the 1950s,[62] typically, so adults assert, because of parental irresponsibility.[63]

In at least three ways, it is likely that these attitudes negatively affect schools' capacity to serve children and families. First, as already implied, *the belief that children are in need of control probably impedes efforts to increase attention to education of children as citizens*—in effect, to increase children's own active and responsible participation in community life. Second, *the concomitant belief that parents cannot be counted upon to exercise control and to impart positive moral values to their children probably increases the pressure on the schools to assume roles that historically have been reserved for families.* Third, *the societal distrust of parents (notwithstanding omnipresent bows to "family values") is often absorbed by teachers and other school personnel,*[64] who, as a result, fail to promote the expansion of support for families and to appreciate the magnitude of human capital and the reservoir of energy present among parents and other caregivers of their students.[65]

Changing such perceptions will be even more difficult than it otherwise would have been, because *school staff members' own credibility is often in question*. A Kettering Foundation study in the mid-1990s found that Americans have a much more positive reaction to *education* than to *schools*.[66] Although their associations to *education* were uniformly positive (relating, e.g., to knowledge and culture), their first response to *schools* commonly was a perception of institutional ineptitude, an expression of concern about the social problems of youth, or a recollection of their own unhappy experiences with authoritarian school personnel.[67] If teachers, principals, and other educators do seek to involve the community as a whole in a school-led initiative to enhance support in order to make childrearing easier, they are thus apt to find an initially unreceptive audience.

Fortunately, however, there is evidence that initial skepticism does give way to expressions of leadership in support for families and communities. *When school administrators have confidence in parents' capacity to contribute significantly to their children's education, they communicate that optimism to teachers, who in turn typically create meaningful and achievable opportunities for their students' parents to participate—and they usually do!*[68]

Some Profound Trends

Demographic Change

Nonetheless, overcoming negative attitudes about parents and schools is an especially tall order for the schools at this point in time. It may be hard to remember the cornerstone importance of schools in promoting a sense of community when a single-minded focus on high-stakes testing in reading and math seems to predominate. Even if there were a wider scope of vision, however, several deeply established social trends, some of global proportion, would make the task challenging. Of particular note for education are changes in (a) ethnic diversity and economic disparity, (b) the social status and community engagement of young adults, and (c) young people's motivation for learning, their sense of purpose, and their involvement in community activities.

At the same time that economic inequality has been persistently and dramatically widening[69] *and that ethnic diversity has been rapidly increasing,*[70] *the gap in educational achievement among ethnic groups has persisted*.[71] No one can deny that court-ordered school desegregation and the corollary federal legislation changed the norms of everyday life in the United States, especially in the South. Unfortunately, however, it is also clear that the effects of desegregation in reducing the education gap and even in securing de facto integration of the schools have been much less pronounced.[72] Although some of the most highly integrated metropolitan areas in the nation are in South Carolina,[73] some counties in the state still have de

facto segregated school systems. In more than a few counties, a racial divide persists between private and public education and even among public school districts.[74]

The overall situation for ethnic minorities in the United States is also a story of notable successes mixed with troubling sequelae of de jure discrimination. Most Americans, regardless of ethnicity, now perceive that race relations are generally good.[75] Of course, there now are many conspicuous examples of powerful and wealthy African Americans and Hispanic Americans.

Nonetheless, it is easy to see that ethnic minorities are substantially under-represented in such circles.[76] Further, the gap between Whites and ethnic minority groups in their average quality of life remains profound. More than two-fifths of African Americans—but "only" one-fourth of Whites—say that they worry "most" or "all" of the time about whether they will be able to pay their bills.[77] Although the proportion of people so describing their experience has varied both within and across ethnic groups as the economy has bulged or contracted, the ratio has remained more or less constant since the Gallup Poll began asking the question more than 20 years ago.[78]

The significance of this difference for children becomes clear when one looks a bit further into the data. When Gallup Poll respondents were recently asked whether there had been times in the past year when they did not have enough money to buy food for their family, 36% of Hispanic Americans and 31% of African Americans responded affirmatively, but only 11% of Whites (itself a disturbingly high percentage) did so.[79] The proportions who sometimes were unable to provide clothing that their family needed were similar (45% of Hispanic Americans; 37% of African Americans; 19% of Whites).[80] As the Gallup Poll's own analyst tersely concluded,"*Despite decades of reform, activism, and economic progress, many minorities still struggle for basic necessities*. These data illustrate the fact that the American dream continues to elude a significant proportion of the U.S. population."[81]

Data collected by various federal agencies further demonstrate that *the rapidly growing Hispanic minority faces a particularly difficult challenge* in achieving true integration in the society at large.[82] In 2003, 5% of all U.S. children (about one-fifth of Asian American and Hispanic American children) had difficulty speaking English. Their parents also often lacked the educational background to provide an optimal environment. For example, 64% of 3- to 5-year-old White children but only 42% of Hispanic American children (47% of African American children) were read to daily in 2001. (Among all parents, about three-fourths of young children whose mothers had college degrees but only about two-fifths of those whose mothers had not completed high school were read to.) In 2004, 15% of all U.S. children (10% of native children with native parents) had at least one parent without a high school diploma. However, at least one parent was not a high school graduate in families of 42% of foreign-born children with at least one foreign-born parent and 34% of U.S.-born children with at least one foreign-born parent. Overall, only 69% of Hispanic American youth completed high school in 2003 (compared with 92% of Whites and 83% of African Americans). One in eight Hispanic 16- to 19-year-olds were in neither school nor employment in 2004.

Obtaining community resources useful in healthy child development is difficult for many Hispanic American families. Even among Hispanic American children living in married-couple, two-parent families, 21% (among all Hispanic American children, 30%) lived in poverty in 2000. Whether because of immigration status or family income, Hispanic American children (79%) were substantially less likely in 2003 to have health insurance than either White (93%) or African American (86%) children. In 2001, only two-fifths of Hispanic American 3- to 5-year-olds were enrolled in a preschool program (compared with three-fifths of White and African American children).

Such problems may be especially serious for Hispanic American families in the Southeast, where (except for Florida) most immigration from Latin America is very recent. As a

result, ethnically specific services, including classes in English as a second language, still are scarce.[83] There are few Hispanic community institutions, and social networks providing access to both formal and informal help are still typically weak. On 10 different measures of social capital (e.g., interpersonal trust; civic participation; faith-based engagement; philanthropic activity; informal socializing), Hispanic Americans in the Charlotte area scored lower—sometimes markedly lower—than did African Americans and Whites in a survey conducted in 2000.[84] This troubling finding is particularly remarkable when one considers that it emerged from a survey conducted prior to much of the current wave of immigration.[85] Hence, it would be unsurprising to find that the lack of community integration and the concomitant gaps in specialized services for Hispanic American families are even more pronounced at present.

The Age of Alienation

The troubling transition to adulthood. Regardless of ethnicity, *young adults in the United States—and, for that matter, other industrialized countries—are commonly and increasingly likely to struggle to find a niche in the community.*[86] This phenomenon is obviously important for its own sake. The ambiguous status of young adults has complex implications for the public schools as the primary designated settings for inculcation of the skills and values needed for young adults to be productive in the workplace and constructively engaged in civil society and the marketplace of ideas.[87]

However, the questions of the skills needed by young adults now and in future cohorts and of the schools' capacity to prepare young people adequately for success as workers and citizens are dwarfed in scope and significance by a corollary problem. The fact that the social and economic insecurity of young parents has been increasing at a dramatic rate with each new cohort means that *the quality of the social environment for the development of children has also been dramatically declining*, even in communities that are generally regarded as growing and prosperous.

The development of an information-based economy obviously has brought many fantastic changes that almost no one foresaw a generation—or maybe even a decade—ago. Conveniences that even the wealthy did not imagine for themselves are now commonplace, and the expertise of specialists on the other side of the world is available to almost all Americans (if not from their home or school, at least from their public library) in seconds or even milliseconds. Choices in the marketplace have grown at a commensurate rate.

These positive, even miraculous changes have been accompanied by other effects that are not so welcome. Perhaps the most obvious and certainly the most widely chronicled is the *digital divide*.[88] Organizations and communities that have the wealth (both economic and human capital) needed to invest in new technologies and to use them efficiently have a clear advantage. In effect, the resulting re-structuring of the economy has enabled the gap between rich and poor to become wider.[89]

There also have been more subtle generational effects that are directly germane to the point under discussion herein. Notably, norms in regard to age of marriage and first child-bearing have been changed dramatically by (a) the level of education that is needed to work in contemporary technical occupations, (b) the itinerant nature of even professional work in rapidly changing industries, and (c) the coincident cultural shift toward an emphasis on personal fulfillment.[90] As the average age of marriage and first child-bearing has increased by five years in the past generation, today's 20- and early 30-somethings are in a kind of never-never-land in which they are legally adults, they are cognitively sophisticated, and they have many of the responsibilities and virtually all of the privileges that historically have been associated with adulthood but in which they lack full independence.

The ambiguity associated with this phase of life is so great that *Time* magazine recently published a cover story on the *twixters*—those who are betwixt and between adolescence and traditional adulthood.[91] The teaser on the cover itself vividly captured the uncertainty and

instability now associated with this age group: "Meet the twixters, young adults who live off their parents, bounce from job to job and hop from mate to mate. They're not lazy... *They just won't grow up.*"[92] The major quibble with the blurb presented by the editors of *Time* might be in the final choice of verb: *won't* instead of *can't*.

As a college education becomes much less unusual in the general population[93] and as the technical complexity of even commonplace jobs continues to increase,[94] a college education is now a requirement for a moderate standard of living,[95] but the marginal value of each year of higher education continues to decline.[96] Young adults find themselves holding an average of seven or eight jobs between ages 18 and 30,[97] and, as corollaries, they commonly experience difficulty in forming relationships (often only to leave or be left in months)[98] and obtaining employer-paid benefits, such as health care.[99] Only half regard themselves as financially independent;[100] indeed, the average 25- or 26-year-old receives more than $2,300 per year from his or her parents.[101]

The financial challenges. The significance of these shaky assets and the related job insecurity is exacerbated by increasing financial demands. Almost half of recent college graduates in the United States pay more than 8% of their income each month to defray student loans; their median debt for that purpose is $18,400.[102] In addition, more than one-fourth of college students use credit cards for part of their support; the result is an average balance of $5,000.[103] Besides starting with a much higher debt than their predecessors, young adults now face rents for housing that are more than 25% higher in real dollars than was the case in the 1980s.[104]

The mix of limited access, stagnant income, and growing expenses (in relation to the situation for young adults even a decade ago) almost inevitably means additional debt and limited savings, if any. Although the following hypothetical case is set in Washington, DC, the

numbers are not likely to be substantially different for a new private college graduate in South Carolina:

> [The new graduate] has a monthly take-home pay of $1,340. With this money, he must repay his loans ($195.16); pay the minimum monthly credit card payment ($125.00); and pay for his basic living costs, including rent in a dingy group house, commuting costs, car insurance, utility bills and groceries (conservatively estimated at $1,050). Before this individual has paid for health insurance, paid for any entertainment (even a movie rental), or saved for an emergency or retirement, this recent college graduate will increase debt by approximately $30 per month.[105]

As a matter of social policy, this scenario of fiscal fragility is even more troubling when one considers that it relates to a young adult who by conventional standards is successful and responsible—a college graduate who lives frugally and pays his bills regularly. Obviously, the picture is much bleaker for many young families.[106] In 2001, the median gross annual income of 25-year-olds in the United States was $20,800.[107] The economic challenges are typically especially great for young adults who are also parents.[108]

Moreover, a disturbing number of young adults are neither students nor employed workers.[109] Of that number, a startling proportion in South Carolina are incarcerated.[110] It goes without saying that these individuals—many of whom are parents[111]—have not yet found a niche in the community.

The growth of social isolation. We must not lose sight of these young adults who are, at best, on the margins of the community. However, we also must recognize the financial challenges facing *most* young adults, indeed most young parents. Moreover, we must be cognizant of the ways in which the new economy creates instability of residence and, therefore, of relationships. *Such instability builds a sense of uncertainty and thus interferes with development of a sense of personal and community identity*. After all, a career plan—an

increasingly rare possession—is typically an important part of one's self-definition. Unpredictability of residence also deters young adults' investment of their time and their energy in community activities and perhaps even in getting to know the family next door.[112] Ironically, such avoidance also interferes with development of sources of social support for oneself and one's own family.

This tendency toward isolation is exacerbated by the growing distrust of both individuals and institutions and the decreasing involvement in community service and in voluntary organizations of all types and sizes—in general, a decline in *social capital*, the "wealth" that people have in relationships.[113] Although this trend has been observed in all industrialized societies in the past generation,[114] it is most common among young people.[115] Tragically, *each cohort is less connected to community institutions and informal social networks than the one that preceded it.*

This point has been most compellingly demonstrated by the annual national survey of college freshmen.[116] Across the past generation, there have been strong linear trends toward greater boredom, sense of being overwhelmed, and preoccupation with "being very well-off financially." At the same time, there have been marked declines in political and religious interest, motivation to make a difference in society, involvement in student organizations, serious conversations with teachers and peers, and productive activity at home and in the community.

When one considers that these are young people who have been successful enough and whose parents have financial resources deep enough for their admission to an institution of higher education, the increase from year to year in the disengagement of first-year college students is especially troubling. It is powerful evidence of widespread social poverty among even the privileged young adults in our society.

Unfortunately, the situation after graduation is worse. When students leave the university, there is a marked decline in their volunteer activity and their interest in community issues and helping others.[117]

Our own research suggests that this *social isolation is a continuing source of stress for young families, regardless of their wealth and social status*. In research that we conducted in Greenville County in the late 1980s, few parents, regardless of social class, had easy access to informal social support (help for which they did not need to write a check).[118] We recently completed similar research in southern Greenville County and matched block groups in the Midlands.[119] On each of a variety of measures of community engagement (e.g., knowing children in the neighborhood outside their own family; having someone on whom they could call for emergency child care), approximately 25-30% of parents of preschool and elementary-school-age children reported being isolated. Although this picture is grim enough, the broader reality is perhaps even more challenging. Although the majority of young parents have *some* connections in the community, daily social support is weak.[120]

The significance for children. The importance of these findings for children's healthy and safe development is clear. To state the matter bluntly, *each time that a cohort of parents is less engaged in the community (including the schools) than their predecessors were, the risk to children increases*. The less engaged that parents are in civic life, the less likely it is that their children will be engaged in schoolwork and community activities.[121] This is a serious problem in itself. Almost by definition, the central purposes of public education[122] become increasingly difficult to fulfill as the responsibilities of citizens become less and less central in the lives of both adults (especially young adults) and youth.

Indeed, the broad threat that a decline in social capital poses for a democratic way of life[123] was the problem that originally attracted Robert Putnam's attention.[124] Social capital is a requisite for a strong democracy, because an ongoing exchange of ideas and the direct

participation of citizens are necessary for such a system.[125] Without existing networks of relationships, such attributes are inherently difficult to generate. (Paradoxically, such networks are also commonly products of the investment of social capital in democratic processes of everyday life.) In particular, democratic *experiences* in the schools—being taken seriously as individuals amid the marketplace of ideas—are more important in children's education as citizens than is the formal curriculum about the rudiments of a democratic political system.[126]

Apart from the downstream socio-political significance of young people's acquisition of democratic values, children have a more immediate stake in the strength of a democratic way of life in the settings of which they are a part. Communities in which there is an ample reservoir of social capital and "natural" processes for its use are optimal settings for children's healthy growth and development. Stated reciprocally, children themselves are the big losers when democratic values and the corollary acts of social responsibility are weakened or lost.[127]

Community experience in self-governance facilitates a sense of *collective efficacy* and bolsters the confidence of parents themselves and of their neighbors, so that together and individually, they are more likely to invest their time and energy in the community.[128] The relationships that are formed as a result create opportunities for exchange of information, emotional support, direct assistance, and informal social control.

The importance of this principle can be illustrated by consideration of the fact that young children are dependent not only on parents but also on other adult relatives, parents' friends and neighbors, and community professionals and paraprofessionals (e.g., child care providers). For example, parents' own relationships with other adults are sources of substantial social and cognitive stimulation for children.[129]

This point has particular significance for learning outside the schools. Consider, for example, the important roles that coaches, church youth leaders, and other youth group leaders—adults to whom parents may introduce their children—can play in the lives of school-

aged children and adolescents.[130] School professionals and community volunteers can facilitate children's "readiness" all the way through school by focusing on enhancement of such relationships, whether the goal is assistance to an individual child or to an entire neighborhood of children who are not adapting well to the struggles of personal development.

This premise was illustrated dramatically in a study of children in high-risk situations (many of whom were known to Child Protective Services) by Desmond Runyan of the University of North Carolina and his colleagues in research at many sites across the country. Runyan et al. found that even one indicator of social capital (e.g., two parents in the home; perceived social support for the mother; regular church attendance) decreased the odds of an abnormal score on a mental health diagnostic instrument or a developmental screening instrument by 29%.[131] Any two did so by 66%.[132]

Given the dramatic positive effects that increases in social capital can have on personal growth and development, it should not be a surprise to find that *the decline in the community support available to families with children in the past generation has directly harmed children's mental health and general well-being*. This troubling conclusion was powerfully demonstrated in a carefully designed study by Jean Twenge.[133] In an analysis of all published studies of anxiety among children, adolescents, and college students between 1952 and 1993, Prof. Twenge found that birth cohort was a far more powerful factor than family environment. Indeed, the changes across time have been so great that general-population samples of children in the 1980s showed more anxiety than did clinical populations in the 1950s! Analysis of the timing of shifts in average anxiety level showed that children's anxiety increased whenever the strength of relationships declined across the society.

Unfortunately, these findings showing a strong trend toward increased anxiety among children, adolescents, and young adults are echoed by research on trends in the prevalence of

depression. Both depression[134] and suicide[135] have become more common among young people, perhaps because of their increasing difficulty in finding meaning in life:

> [O]ne truth about meaning is this: the larger the entity to which you can attract yourself, the more meaning you will feel your life has. While some argue that generations that lived for God, for America, for Duty, or for their children were misguided, these same generations surely felt their lives imbued with meaning. The individual, the consuming self, isolated from larger entities, is a very poor site for a meaningful life. However, the bloated self is fertile soil for the growth of depression.[136]

Promoting Youth Engagement

Disengagement Among Young People Today

Amid such a widespread sense of anomie, *a lack of engagement by students in their school work and related activities is endemic*, at least in secondary schools. Although the label that Barbara Schneider and David Stevenson used as the title of their large-scale longitudinal study of U.S. teenagers was catchy and descriptive (*The Ambitious Generation*), the more telling image of adolescents today may have been in the subtitle: *Motivated But Directionless*.[137] From the 1950s to the 1990s, U.S. teenagers' expectations grew enormously. The proportion of high school seniors predicting that they would go to college grew from 55% to more than 90%, and there was comparable growth in the proportion expecting to pursue a professional career (42% to more than 70%).[138] Unfortunately, however, neither teenagers themselves nor their parents typically have specific plans for achieving those lofty goals, even though the young people's aspirations are usually matched by their parents' own hopes and expectations.[139] To make matters worse the career mix that adolescents expect—and that parents confirm by their inaction—is markedly discrepant from the current reality in the job market.[140]

Teenagers often crave advice from their parents about education and careers, but many parents perceive such guidance to be outside their own expertise and, therefore, properly within the aegis of school professionals.[141] Perhaps this perception should be unsurprising, given the complexities of the contemporary market: the tasks associated with jobs like *systems analyst*,

venture capitalist, and even *administrative assistant* are often mysterious; many jobs far from a laboratory might reasonably be labeled *computer technician,*[142] and the path to a career is commonly circuitous, changing, unstable, and even unmapped.[143]

Direction from other sources is also unlikely to be available for most adolescents. For example, employers are unlikely to provide guidance. Although most teenagers are employed at some point in work for pay, these "McJobs" rarely have a clear link to young people's career plans.[144]

However, the problem of a lack of direction is not simply one of a lack of adult advising about career matters. *Unfortunately, the isolation that their parents increasingly experience is mirrored and magnified in young people's own lives*. The picture that Schneider and Stevenson painted with the words of the participants in their surveys is bleak indeed. *Community* is the missing element. Even relationships with peers are typically quite limited:

> Unlike teenagers in the 1950s, ...adolescents [in the 1990s] do not have long-lasting peer friendships. The spend considerable periods outside of school alone; they have few friends for longer than several months; few have steady girlfriends or boyfriends; and some even claim not to have a best friend. The social groups they belong to are very fluid, and teenagers move easily from group to group.[145]

Research shows that about one-half of all high school students are chronically disengaged, inattentive, and bored.[146] When "beeped" randomly during the week, *about 25% of the time the average adolescent—not only the average juvenile delinquent but also the average honor student—reports being bored.*[147] Confirming the picture that is emerging each year from the annual survey of college freshmen, surveys of secondary school students show a low prevalence of intrinsic motivation. Lacking a sense of purpose, being rarely challenged, and having weak and often unsustained relationships, far too many young people—even those who are "successful" by ordinary standards—report an empty feeling much of the time:

> High rates of boredom, alienation, and disconnection from meaningful challenge are not signs of psychopathology, at least not in most cases, but rather signs of a deficiency in positive development....Many youth do their schoolwork, comply with their parents, hang out with their friends, and get through the day, but are not invested in paths into the future that excite them or feel like they originate from within.[148]

This disengagement becomes more and more typical as students mature. Students' academic motivation commonly declines steadily from the primary grades through high school,[149] and academic success becomes a marker of "nerdiness" more than merit from the perspective of peers.[150] Not only are students less and less engaged as they move from grade to grade, but they are also less and less challenged, at least in part because their own involvement (or lack thereof) commonly mirrors their teachers' low expectations.[151] Reflecting a mismatch between students' developmental capacities and teachers' practices, students' opportunities for choice and personal responsibility in the schools actually decline as they grow older.[152]

Comparison of the students' biological development with their academic performance suggests that their decreasing motivation is primarily the result of problematic school organization and norms, not developmental factors per se.[153] Imagine a student who moves from a small elementary school to a mega-school for the middle-school grades and to an even bigger campus-style school for high school. In the elementary school, the student has one teacher in each grade, and that teacher is likely to experience psychological and situational pressure to be "supportive" and therefore to reinforce individual effort. In the secondary schools, however, it is stunningly easy for students to become "lost" without a single meaningful relationship with an adult, and peers' own response to exceptional effort is often mean-spirited. In such a context, no one should be surprised when the secondary school student invests little

time in academic work and rarely participates in extracurricular activities—when indeed the student is "bored" by it all.

International comparisons also demonstrate that this scenario is challenging but by no means inevitable. U.S. students' achievement in math and science falls from near the top at the elementary level to near the bottom at the high school level among nations participating in comparative national assessments of educational performance.[154] Although numerous factors are pushing toward the general disconnection among people, especially young people,[155] it is intensified in the United States, at least in part by the way that schools, especially secondary schools, are organized in this country.

A Vision for Change

Articulating a vision. There can be no question that there is a need for reform to promote the meaningful integration of adolescents and young adults into the community at large. The analysis thus far suggests the following vision for re-structuring schools. Although it is particularly pertinent to secondary education, it also is relevant to elementary and even pre-school education.

> **Schools and other settings for youth development should be small enough that students can "naturally" find meaningful and distinctive niches for themselves. Within such a framework, care should be taken to ensure (a) that every student has a mentor and advocate, (b) that instruction is sufficiently relevant to everyday life to be intrinsically interesting, (c) that school staff view themselves as part of a cooperative learning community grounded in respect for each other and for students, parents, and other stakeholders, and (d) that students and parents are encouraged to participate in enhancing community well-being, both within and outside the school walls.**

The modifying clause in the first sentence is important. Besides being based on a faulty problem analysis (a focus on determination of the age at which children make a major school transition), the movement to middle schools has failed to produce its intended goal because the resulting "new" school form typically differs little, if any, on key dimensions (e.g., school size; adult supervision and support) from the predecessor junior high schools.

Supportive personal relationships are important in fostering engagement, and such relationships are most likely to occur in smaller settings.[156] At the same time, greater access to adults, although important, is not the essence of the effectiveness of small schools in enhancing student satisfaction, motivation, participation, and achievement. Research in early childhood education has shown that a reduction in teacher-pupil ratio without a reduction in class size does not yield the same effects.[157] Without a smaller setting, even if the number of adults involved increases, the number of opportunities for student participation remains constant. Hence, all other things being equal, smaller is better when school buildings and programs are being designed.[158]

Nonetheless, it should be remembered that a small setting merely facilitates a humane and motivating environment for learning; it does not guarantee it. Hence, small schools often promote student achievement in an atmosphere of intergenerational respect and trust, "but [this] effect is most likely to be achieved in schools where teachers assume collective responsibility for student learning and there is a highly developed professional community."[159]

Stated somewhat differently, small size *enables* conscientious and thoughtful teachers to give students opportunities that stimulate their intellectual interest, activate their social conscience, and provide meaningful practice in skill development and problem-solving. In that sense, small schools are most apt to be stimulating for teachers as well as students. Such schools can provide unusual diversity of activities and experience in leadership for teachers just as they can for students. Consistent with that analysis, the ingredients in teacher engagement are much the same as in student engagement.[160]

A panel of the National Academies of Science gave an apt description of the human resources that should be developed within the schools:

> Fundamental changes are needed in how adults and students relate to one another in high schools[, a point that has almost as much validity in elementary and

middle schools]. *Every student needs to be known well by at least one adult* who can monitor progress and communicate to specialists and parents when difficulties emerge, who can monitor progress and communicate to specialists and parents when difficulties emerge, who can identify needs for special services and talents that should be recognized and developed, and who can listen to, encourage, and advocate for the student.[161]

The National Academies panel cautioned, however, that achievement of this goal is not simply a matter of a school board's or a legislature's writing a check to fund the hiring of more mental health and social service professionals[162]: "Substantial increases in the number of specialized personnel in high school will not achieve the personalized connections and climate of caring that youth need. A meaningful change in the climate requires the participation of all adults in the school."[163]

In other words, an implicit rule that provision of the "human touch" is a task for specialized professionals is apt itself to result in a sterile environment that creates a need for such care. In an engaging school, lively interaction around personally relevant subject matter is simply part of the culture; such personal relevance requires genuine interest in students as individuals. As the National Academies panel noted, "no intervention or services offered on the side are potent enough to promote high levels of academic engagement in a dysfunctional, unsupportive school."[164]

At the same time, the desired assurance that each student has a mentor and advocate does not connote that teachers should have all such assignments. In particular, this role presents an opportunity for engagement in school life by the community as a whole.[165] Besides potentially offering "real-world" laboratories for students' incidental learning and their "owning" key concepts acquired in the classroom through application in community settings, such expressions of caring by themselves are motivating factors that promote students' sense of

belonging and result in improved student outcomes.[166] Accordingly, engaging schools offer access to outside experts and audiences.[167]

As the National Academies panel further noted, such experience in work with adults who are not education professionals is part of a context that promotes "students' confidence in their ability to learn and succeed in school by providing challenging instruction and support for meeting high standards."[168] Essentially, the message is the same as in the song about a move to the big city: "If I can make it there, I can make it anywhere." Analogously, the expectation of meaningful application of knowledge in the community through school-related activities not only ironically connotes importance of school instruction itself, it also offers opportunities for positive relationships with adults and builds students' confidence in their capacity to master difficult tasks and concepts. the work in the classroom and they clearly convey their own high expectations for their students' success.[169]

An emphasis on making "the curriculum and instruction relevant to [students'] experiences, cultures, and long-term goals"[170] requires an openness to students' own choice of courses, study materials, and work strategies.[171] Besides promoting intrinsic motivation,[172] a measure of autonomy in learning facilitates the choice of material that has personal relevance and thus increases the likelihood of crystallization and generalization of new knowledge.[173] Students' sense that they are being heard and taken seriously as individuals also promotes students' perception that they are being treated fairly and that they *belong* in the school and the community.[174] Such perceptions are themselves motivating,[175] and they also contribute to students' development as citizens.[176] In contrast, an authoritarian school climate impedes educational achievement in general and civic engagement and socialization in particular.[177]

Diverse extracurricular activities can be important elements in providing supervised after-school activities, promoting civic engagement, building sense of belonging, and responding to individual interests.[178] If both student-led and adult-guided, extracurricular

activities provide opportunities for socialization with other young people and for education by adult role models in ways that are unlikely to occur in conventional school programs.[179] Even after statistical controls are added for social class, gender, and intelligence, participation in extracurricular activities is a strong predictor of academic achievement, probably because of enhanced social skills, peer relations, and attachment to the school.[180]

Age-integrated programs have some special benefits in that regard.[181] For example, serving as a tutor for younger children has been demonstrated to reduce the school dropout rate among low-achieving older youth.[182] The experience is intrinsically interesting to both the tutors and their pupils, and it promotes a sense of competence, personal significance, and civic responsibility among the older youth. Such programs thus are excellent examples of the *helping paradox*—the principle that helpers tend to benefit more than those whom they serve.[183]

In that regard, the discussion of youth engagement has focused on secondary schools because of the particular motivational problems that are often evident in such settings. At the same time, it is important to recognize that the several principles embedded in the vision articulated at the beginning of this section are as applicable to primary-grade children as they are to high school seniors. It has long been assumed (mistakenly) that civic matters are not salient until adolescence—a fallacy that is reflected in most social studies curricula. However, the evidence is clear that fundamental values of political culture are inculcated in early and middle childhood.[184] Accordingly, promotion of a sense of belonging and an appreciation of personal responsibility in community life should be a central educational concern in the elementary schools at least as much as in the secondary schools.

Promoting Parental Engagement in the Schools and the Community

General Findings

One way to promote student engagement is to provide avenues for parent participation. Although that is by no means the only reason for encouragement of parent involvement in the schools and indeed the community at large, such activity does provide a powerful model for children. Such an effect is especially likely if parents' participation is in fact reinforced through a welcoming response by the relevant authorities. Both the parents and their children learn that they are important people, and that they can make a difference in their community. Further, children are apt to learn that such service is a desirable and expectable aspect of family and community life.

The benefits to students of parent involvement in the schools are legion: better grades; higher achievement test scores in reading and math; greater sense of engagement in schoolwork; fewer behavior problems; higher self-esteem; greater compliance on homework; more diligent perseverance on academic tasks; greater classroom participation; fewer special education placements; greater enrollment in post-secondary education; better attendance; lower frequency of dropping out; fewer suspensions; greater development of special talents; less involvement in risky behavior.[185]

Perhaps counter-intuitively, the benefits of parent participation in their children's education go well beyond the students themselves. Elaborating this point in her Lightner Witmer Address to the American Psychological Association Division of School Psychology, Sandra Christenson summarized the other effects, which ripple across the community:

- Teachers are recognized by parents for better interpersonal and teaching skills, evaluated higher on teaching performance by principals, and indicate greater satisfaction with their jobs, requesting fewer transfers.
- Parents show a greater understanding of the work of schools, improve their communication with their children in general and about school work in particular,

increase their communication with educators, and are more involved in learning activities at home.

- Schools are rated as more effective, and there are more successful school programs.[186]

The benefits probably go still further. As already noted, parent involvement is apt to increase the sense of efficacy and, therefore, the family's broader community engagement—including, accordingly, their own access to informal family support. Moreover, the benefits go across students' school years, even though parent participation steadily decreases, in substantial part because of the impersonal feel of many secondary schools.[187]

Such experiences are common in South Carolina, as elsewhere. Few secondary schools have systematic programs for parent involvement.[188] Although South Carolina parents' personal characteristics (ethnicity, education, and income) are unrelated to their satisfaction with family-school relations, such attitudes become—and stay—much less positive after students enter middle school.[189]

Indeed, the most remarkable aspect of parent participation in the schools is just how unnatural it is, notwithstanding its well-documented positive effects. As one South Carolina research team summarized, "parents and educators frequently seem like islands in the lives of children, surrounded by competing agendas, often without visible connections to one another."[190] Perhaps most fundamentally, parents and teachers often have conflicting views about what parent participation means, with parents emphasizing the efforts that they make in the home to support the school and school personnel often unrealistically (given contemporary work schedules) expecting parents to volunteer their time at the school itself.[191]

The Significance of Parental Participation

As I framed the issue earlier in this report, the relation between parental participation and children's school achievement could best be conceived as "a matter of influence." Although the modal belief probably is that schools must take the hand that is dealt them in dealing with

parents, much of the variance in this relationship is within schools' control. As Christine Hoxby has noted, family variables fall into three categories: those that are beyond personal control (e.g., race; ethnicity); those that are partially within personal control (e.g., parental education; family income); those that directly reflect school-family relations (e.g., visits to the school; parental involvement in educational planning; use of the library).[192] Obviously, schools should focus their attention on the third category, which involves a diverse array of activities:

> Family conduct variables that are statistically significant predictors of good students outcomes include owning an atlas, owning a dictionary, owning more than fifty books, having a computer for child's use with homework, having a calculator for child's use with homework, having attended a school event, parents' checking that homework is done, parents' planning course-taking with child, using the library, visiting science or history museums, parents' knowing what courses child is taking, parents' knowing how well child is doing in school, and parents' knowing graduation requirements.[193]

It is noteworthy how few of the items on this list (just one) require physical presence at the school. Teachers and counselors typically evaluate parents' interest in their children's education on the bases of whether parents help with clerical tasks at the school or attend assemblies during the school day miss the most important dimensions of parental involvement.[194] However, attendance at school functions during the workday is probably a better indicator of employers' flexibility than parents' motivation. Parents themselves identify work schedules as the most powerful impediment to their involvement at the school.[195]

Further, parents —especially those who have relatively little formal education—often regard the classroom work as matters for professional expertise.[196] They often perceive their own contribution to be expressing interest in their children's schoolwork (e.g., review of the school day in dinnertime conversation) and ensuring that they are appropriately prepared for the school day (e.g., dressed and ready to go when the bus arrives).[197] In fact, *parents' behavior in*

their homes—not at the school—is a particularly powerful influence. Most of the interstate variation in achievement test scores is explicable by three factors for which parents have primary responsibility: attendance; reading in the home; amount of television watching.[198]

Described in a speech to the National Association of School Psychologists, Jesse Jackson's prescription for educational change is illustrative: "Parents need to do five things: (1) Take their children to school, (2) Meet their children's teachers, (3) Exchange phone numbers, (4) Turn off the TV three hours each day, and (5) Pick up report cards every nine weeks."[199] Building on these premises, Rodick and Henggeler conducted a randomized clinical trial to evaluate the long-term effects of Rev. Jackson's PUSH for Excellence in improving the reading performance of low-achieving 7th graders.[200] An advanced undergraduate or doctoral student in clinical psychology met with each student's parents and discussed the importance of parental involvement in children's education and the usefulness of reinforcement of children's effort as well as their achievement. With the young person himself or herself, they developed a contract to set aside a television-free hour each night to work together on reading texts of their choice (e.g., novels; mechanics' manuals). The university volunteer made weekly phone calls to the parents to monitor and reinforce progress and to offer assistance in the reading instruction per se. This simple, low-cost assistance to parents was far superior to conventional reading classes in evoking sustainable change in reading skills (vocabulary, reading recognition, and reading comprehension) and (achievement motivation.

From "assistants" to "partners." Unfortunately, however, many schools have far to go in institutionalizing support for such home-based parent involvement, in part because educators often lack faith in parents' capacity to play a central role in their children's education. For example, surveys conducted by the Kettering Foundation in the early 1990s showed that most educators (85% of administrators and three-fourths of teachers) opposed increased involvement by parents in determining matters of educational policy (e.g., allocating funds; determining the

curriculum), notwithstanding support for such a process by a solid majority of the general public.[201] Amplified

by educators' concerns about school safety (both literal and political), the implicit message that school officials often convey to parents who do visit their children's schools is that the students' parents are, at best, merely guests.[202]

In view, however, of the critical importance that parents—and potentially other community members—have in building conditions suitable for children's year-round learning, *it is time for educational reform to institutionalize ways to recognize parents' value in their children's education and to facilitate their involvement in* ***partnerships***:

- A *student-focused philosophy* wherein educators and families cooperate, coordinate, and collaborate to enhance learning opportunities, educational progess, and school success for students in four domains: academic, social, emotional, and behavioral.

- A belief in shared responsibility for educating and socializing children—both families and educators are *essential* and provide resources for children's learning and progress in school. There are no prescribed roles or activities for families or educators; rather, options for active, realistic participation are created.

- An emphasis on the quality of the interface and ongoing connection between families and schools. Creating a constructive *relationship* (how families and educators work together in meaningful ways) to execute their respective roles in promoting the academic and social development of children and youth is most important.

- A *preventive, solution-oriented* focus in which families and educators strive to create conditions that facilitate student learning, engagement, and development.

In summary, family and school as partners is a philosophy and way of thinking about forming connections among families and schools to foster positive school and learning experiences for children and youth.[203]

A detailed description of the practical implications of this concept of school-family partnerships can be found in Christenson and Sheridan's book, *Schools and Families: Creating Essential Connections for Learning*, especially the tables elaborating key elements of such partnerships,[204] including scores of examples of ways that parents and educators can act as

"co-": co-communicators, co-supporters, co-learners, co-teachers, and co-decision makers.[205] The use of the *co-* prefix, although linguistically awkward, is intentional for its connotations in relation to a true partnership. The point is that it is not sufficient—although a step forward in most schools—systematically to apply the old view of parental participation as a service to the school.[206] Rather, parents and professional educators are all key actors in children's education.

Such an emphasis on parent-teacher partnerships encompasses an ethical view of mutual respect. It is also indicative of an empirical reality. The benefits of parental involvement in the schools are directly related to the depth of such involvement, so much so that programs that treat parents as full partners in their children's education elicit educational achievement by children from low-income families at the level associated with a middle-class background.[207]

Servants to families. One might add that, apart from—but relevant to—the *children's* education*, schools have a legitimate and potentially powerful role in service to* ***families*** *and even to* ***parents*** *specifically*. In philosophy and scope, the best school-related or -based services have generally been firmly within the *family support movement*, a largely unorganized campaign since the 1970s to promote a family-friendly ideology in communities, particularly in human service agencies.[208]

Family Support America, perhaps the vanguard of the movement (at least among practitioners), has described family support as: "(a) a set of beliefs and an approach to strengthening and empowering families and communities; (b) a type of grassroots, community-based program designed to prevent family problems; (c) a shift in human services delivery; (d) a movement for social change."[209] The ideology and strategies were further outlined as follows:

It's family support if it's:

- Building relationships based on equality and respect;
- Improving families' ability to access resources the need;
- Actively involving families in all aspects of the work;

- Building on strengths to effect change;
- Celebrating diversity and affirming cultural, racial, and linguistic identity;
- Strengthening community;
- Advocating for fair, responsive, and accountable systems.[210]

The venue for such integrated service delivery typically is a family resource center, which often is in a school or, even if not, typically is the site for school-administered programs, most often in relation to family-oriented early childhood education, adult education, after-school programs, and/or classes in English as a second language. Depending on the nature of the center's "home," health, mental health, social service, and vocational services are often on the menu.

There are no specifically defining characteristics for a family resource center, so programs that are so labeled often vary enormously in the service menu, organizational auspice, administrative structure, and the "feel" of the center (from homey and non-professional to bureaucratic and clinical.[211] In general, there are two distinctive elements of family resource centers. First, they are intended to increase service availability and accessibility, usually through co-location and some resulting benefits of clustering and economies of scale. Too often organizations calling themselves family resource centers stop at this point. Finding and even using services becomes more convenient, but each participating agency's services have little qualitative difference from those which are delivered in more traditional settings. In this regard, school-based service providers often make little effort to blend into school culture or even to take advantage of the special opportunities and developmental emphases that schools offer. Second, as implied in Family Support America's description of family support, family resource centers often strive to transform services and even to transform communities. The second element is surely the more consequential one in responding to the trends and issues presented in this report.[212]

Nationally, the best known and widely replicated example of school-based family resource centers is undoubtedly CoZi, the integration of the work of two distinguished "public academicians" in the Yale Child Study Center, psychiatrist James Comer and psychologist Edward Zigler.[213] CoZi pulls together Prof. Comer's School Development Programs and Prof. Zigler's Schools of the 21st Century. The resulting merger includes a blend of the school with the community (especially parents) in both programs and governance, year-round full-day child care, before- and after-school care, outreach to families in their homes, and a full complement of family-oriented health and human services. CoZi is designed to transform the school to be a true center of community by building a sense of community both within and outside the school's wall, providing opportunities for parents to grow not only in partnership but indeed in leadership, and offering easily available, non-compartmentalized, family-friendly services that enable families to meet basic needs of life in the 21st century.

The author of this report is leading the implementation and evaluation of Strong Communities for Children in the Golden Strip, an analogous new model in southern Greenville County and surrounding communities.[214] Supported by a long-term, multi-million-dollar grant from The Duke Endowment and designed ultimately to prevent child abuse and neglect, Strong Communities combines the efforts of thousands of volunteers with many organizations that are usually not heavily involved in human services (e.g., fire departments; churches; civic organizations). Strong Communities' penultimate goal is for every child and every parent in its service area to know that whenever they have reason to celebrate, worry, or grieve, someone will notice, and someone will care. A corollary goal is for every family of a child under 6 who wants someone specifically designated to look out for them to have such a person.

To meet the goal of universal family support, besides working intensively on community mobilization for family support, Strong Communities includes an array of programs for individual families under the umbrella of Strong Families. For example, Family Watch involves community

police officers' greeting new families (and new babies) on their beat with donated welcome baskets and matching them with Family Friends (volunteers from community organizations) who have weekly contact with them. Extra Care for Caring Families combines group well child visits in pediatric and family health centers with home-based family support and parent education services.

These and other innovations will be combined in Family Activity Centers, now under development, that will enable all families of young children to have access to a variety of pro bono services that meet families' material and social needs and that link young families to each other families and to community resources. Among the services that are intended to be available in all of the centers are Parents' Night Out, Drop In and Play, parent-child group activities, financial education and counseling, and generic social services.

Leaving No Child Outside

Given the magnitude of the issues addressed in this report and the diversity of the settings in which these concerns are manifest, the challenges are certainly daunting. *Even beginning to address the growing disconnection among people in our society requires attention to the norms of everyday life for children and their parents—in effect, culture itself*.[215] Nonetheless, just as such norms changed dramatically in the past generation, they can be altered again—especially given that the reforms that are needed remain consonant with historic values that are so basic that they may be embedded in the human condition.

Everyone wants to be noticed and cared for—and everyone achieves some measure of fulfillment through their own attention to others and care for them.[216] Although facilitation of such norms of reciprocal help is challenging powerful global trends of long standing, it is achievable.[217] Although a culture change sounds like a radical endeavor, in this instance it is

fundamentally conservative—reifying the Golden Rule and, in so doing, recognizing the hopes and strivings that remain important in children's and parents' experience.

Attention to these concerns is well within schools' mission. Schools have both moral and legal responsibilities to create a humane and safe environment in which children can learn. Moreover, no one can seriously question that inculcation of concern for others and education in skills useful in expression of such concern are fundamental to the development of citizens who are full participants in caring communities.[218]

Given the strength of the relationship between social capital and children's well-being, schools will have ever-increasing difficulty in educating students unless steps are taken to reverse the centrifugal trends in our society. *Without networks of relationships to support the development of young people, the schools' principal functions will be frustrated.* Indeed, it is useful to conceive of school re-structuring as removal of barriers to learning.[219]

If the schools act alone, they will not be able to fulfill the vision of a tightly woven social fabric. This general principle applies, of course, to other settings for young people and their families.[220] As one well-known commentator on family services has summarized, "We have come, at last, to recognize that the police, in isolation, cannot produce public safety; that schools, in isolation cannot produce educated children; that child protection agencies, in isolation, cannot protect children; and that even the best health care and social services can't service people out of poverty."[221]

The principle applies with special force to the schools, however. As primary community institutions, schools must be integral players in the effort to build meaningful and universal centers of community in which mutual assistance is a norm of everyday life. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine a serious effort to enhance support for children and families without leadership by the public schools.

Two historic attributes of the schools are worthy of mention in that regard. First and perhaps more obvious, no other institution approaches the schools in the breadth and depth of their access to young people and, by extension, their parents. Because of compulsory attendance, virtually the entire population is enrolled in school at least from ages 5 to 16. Of course, most are enrolled until 18, and many are on the school rolls at age 4 or younger. Moreover, they are "captive" six hours per day for nine months per year. Hence, anyone hoping to change—or sustain—the culture is unlikely to find another setting that presents the opportunities that the schools do.

Second, the core mission of public education is to promote socialization of children and adolescents to meet society's needs for educated, productive citizens inculcated in the fundamental values of the culture.[222] Recognizing this point, the U.S. Supreme Court has asserted that "the State may do much, go very far, indeed, in order to improve the quality of its citizens, physically, mentally and morally."[223] Indeed, this idea was at the foundation of the Court's initial decision that racial segregation violates the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment:

> Today, education is perhaps the most important function of state and local governments. Compulsory school attendance laws and the great expenditures for education both demonstrate our recognition of the importance of education to our democratic society. It is required in the performance of our most basic public responsibilities, even service in the armed forces. *It is the very foundation of good citizenship*. Today it is a principal instrument in awakening the child to cultural values, in preparing him for later professional training, and in helping him to adjust normally to his environment.[224]

Consistent with the goal of promotion of good citizenship and the practical effects of various approaches to teaching, schools should become *communities of learners* built on norms

of peer cooperation and collaboration in addressing problems of personal relevance in an atmosphere of openness.[225] Cross-cultural research shows the potential complementarity of school emphases on development of both personal autonomy (a sense of person efficacy) and strong relationships (a sense of community).[226] As in Strong Communities, such action blends in creation of a humane environment respectful of the individuals within it—a place where everyone will be noticed and cared for.

In that regard, although federal policymakers have emphasized "leaving no child *behind*," South Carolina's communities are challenged to "leave no child *outside.*" South Carolina not only has one of the highest incarceration rates among the states,[227] but it has the dubious distinction of ranking first in school suspensions and third in expulsions.[228]

Further, the schools are often implicated in the removal of children and adolescents from the community at large. Three of the top five reasons for referral to the juvenile justice system involve misdemeanors or status offenses related to school behavior (1, disturbing schools; 4, contempt of court [commonly, violation of an order to attend school]; 5, truancy).[229] Fifteen per cent of the juveniles ultimately committed to the Department of Juvenile Justice receive that disposition for contempt of court.[230] Others probably follow the same route (commitment for failure to attend school) for violation of probation or parole, by far the most common offense leading to commitment (35% of commitments).[231] Almost 60% of the young people referred to the family court are African American, as are almost 70% of those who are ultimately committed to the Department of Juvenile Justice.[232]

In that regard, a panel of the National Academies noted the differential effects of failing to take parent and youth engagement seriously:

> Learning and succeeding in school requires active engagement—whether students are rich or poor, black, brown, or white. The core principles that underlie engagement are applicable to all schools—whether they are in urban, suburban, or rural

communities. Yet although engagement is important for all students and all schools, the consequences of disengagement vary substantially. When students from advantaged backgrounds become disengaged, they may learn less than they could, but they usually get by or they get second chances; most eventually graduate and move on to other opportunities. In contrast, when students from disadvantaged backgrounds in high-poverty, urban high schools become disengaged, they are less likely to graduate and consequently face severely limited opportunities. Failure to earn even the most basic educational credential or acquire the basic skills needed to function in adult society increases dramatically their risk of unemployment, poverty, poor health, and involvement in the criminal justice system.[233]

A cautionary note in that regard is that, nationally, school reform has had minimal effect on the lowest performing schools.[234] However, the approach that is being advocated in this report would result in improvement of the quality of life for children, adolescents, and their families regardless of their social status.

After having called the attention of both scholars and policymakers to the epidemic and growing problem of isolation within our society, Robert Putnam and a colleague recently published a book of case studies of communities and settings that have been successful in generating social capital and thriving on it. Their closing challenge is a good point on which to end this report:

> Reweaving social webs will depend in part on the efforts of dedicated local leaders who choose to pursue their goals (whether teaching phonics, unionizing workers, or reducing on-the-job injuries) through the sometimes slow, frequently fractious, and profoundly transformative route of social-capital building. But reweaving will also depend on our ability to create new spaces for recognition, reconnection, conversation, and debate.[235]

Surely our public schools should be leading exemplars of such "new spaces" for the growth of community and the development of our children.

Notes

[1]SANDRA L. CHRISTENSON & SUSAN M. SHERIDAN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES: CREATING ESSENTIAL CONNECTIONS FOR LEARNING 65 (2001) (citation omitted). *See also* DIVISION OF BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES AND EDUCATION, ACHIEVING HIGH EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS FOR ALL 32 (2002) [hereinafter HIGH STANDARDS] (report of the National Research Council) ("Each student brings to school understandings and beliefs derived from his or her own idiosyncratic experiences that, in turn, are shaped by socioeconomic, racial/ethnic, gender, religious, and other social identities that come into play in various social contexts").

[2]COMMITTEE ON DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SCIENCE OF LEARNING, HOW PEOPLE LEARN: BRAIN, MIND, EXPERIENCE, AND SCHOOL 14-15 (expanded ed., 2000) [hereinafter HOW PEOPLE LEARN] (report of a committee of the National Research Council). Starting from the premise that the Committee's three findings represent "fundamental and well-established principles of learning...[that are] particularly important for teachers to understand and be able to incorporate in their teaching," a subsequent body of the Academies (another committee of the National Research Council) prepared a volume translating the scientific findings into guidance for educators. M. Suzanne Donovan & John D. Bransford, *Introduction, in* COMMITTEE ON *HOW PEOPLE LEARN*: A TARGETED REPORT FOR TEACHERS, HOW STUDENTS LEARN 1, 1 (2005).

The Committee on Developments in the Science of Learning, *supra*, did not intend to imply that children bring misconceptions simply because of inadequate or erroneous education outside school (for example, stereotypes communicated by prejudiced parents or peers). They also noted the errors embedded in immature reasoning, some of which, if uncorrected, may persist into adulthood. *Id.* at 15-16. The Committee's broader point was that good instruction starts from the understandings that children bring to the classroom, not from scratch. *Id.* at 15.

[3]COMMITTEE ON INTEGRATING THE SCIENCE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT, FROM NEURONS TO NEIGHBORHOODS: THE SCIENCE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT 4 (2000) [hereinafter NEURONS TO NEIGHBORHOODS] (report of a committee of the National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine).

[4]*Id.*

[5]*See* HOW PEOPLE LEARN, *supra* note 2, at 82 (discussing the importance of a "community of learners").

[6]NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS PANEL, READY SCHOOLS (1998).

[7]DORIS R. ENTWISLE ET AL., CHILDREN, SCHOOLS, AND INEQUALITY (1997); Karl L. Alexander & Doris R. Entwisle, *Achievement in the First Two Years of School: Patterns and Processes*, 53(2) MONOGRAPHS OF SOC'Y FOR RESEARCH IN CHILD DEV. (Serial No. 218, 1988); Doris R. Entwisle & Karl L. Alexander, *Early Schooling and Social Stratification, in* THE TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN 13 (Robert C. Pianta & Martha J. Cox eds., 1999) [hereinafter TRANSITION].

[8]This finding closely resembles the results of other research on the relation between primary-grade performance and ultimate academic success (e.g., high school graduation). HIGH STANDARDS, *supra* note 1, at 43.

[9]Entwisle & Alexander, *supra* note 7, at 33 (emphasis added).

[10]As Entwisle and Alexander, *id.*, imply, students' school experience is apt to be aversive when the climate is disorganized or hostile as a result of "failing" teachers' and administrators' discouragement when they actually perform as well as peers in "successful" schools do in the amount that they teach. *See* COMMITTEE ON INCREASING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT AND MOTIVATION TO LEARN, ENGAGING SCHOOLS: FOSTERING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' MOTIVATION TO LEARN 34 (2004) [hereinafter ENGAGING SCHOOLS] (report of a committee of the National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine) (describing the relation of teacher morale to student engagement).

[11]*See* NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS PANEL, THE NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS REPORT: BUILDING A NATION OF LEARNERS (1995). Toward the end that "all children in America will start school ready to learn," the Panel set an objective that "[a]ll children will have access to high-quality and developmentally appropriate preschool programs that help prepare children for school." *Id.* at 10.

[12]COMMITTEE ON EARLY CHILDHOOD PEDAGOGY, EAGER TO LEARN: EDUCATING OUR PRESCHOOLERS 132 (2001) [hereinafter EAGER TO LEARN] (report of a committee of the National Research Council). *See also* Nicholas Zill, *Promoting Educational Equity and Excellence in Kindergarten, in* TRANSITION, *supra* note 7, at 67, 79 ("There is considerable evidence that children who have attended Head Start, pre-kindergarten, or other center-based preschool programs come to kindergarten with more accomplishments than children who have not attended such programs").

[13]*See, e.g.*, ARTHUR J. REYNOLDS, SUCCESS IN EARLY INTERVENTION: THE CHICAGO CHILD-PARENT CENTERS (2000); Edward Gotts, *Home-Based Early Intervention, in* RURAL PSYCHOLOGY 337 (Alan W. Childs & Gary B. Melton eds., 1983).

[14]EAGER TO LEARN, *supra* note 12, at 137.

In one of its principal findings, the National Academies panel on early childhood education took pains to emphasize that an investment in low-quality programs may even be harmful:

> *Young children who are living in circumstances that place them at greater risk of school failure—including poverty, low level of maternal education, maternal depression, and other factors that can limit their access to opportunities and resources that enhance learning and development—are much more likely to succeed in school if they attend well-planned, high-quality early childhood programs.* Many children, especially those in low-income households, are served in child care programs of such low quality that learning and development are not enhanced and may even be jeopardized.

Id. at 308 (emphasis in the original).

[15]*Id.* at 139-44.

[16]*See, e.g.*, NEURONS TO NEIGHBORHOODS, *supra* note 3, at 112-18, 146-49, 166-68, & 386.

[17]A panel convened by the National Academies to review the political—and, in some cases, scientific—claims about the body of knowledge that is often (and, to a large extent, incorrectly) referred to as "the new brain research" concluded that the emphasis on neurological and behavioral development in the period from birth to 3 years of age has been "highly problematic." *Id.* at 391. There are few aspects of development that are limited to critical periods. *Id.* at 183. Rather, neuropsychological development is an ongoing endeavor:

> [D]evelopment of the neural systems supporting cognitive, social, and emotional competencies remains open to experience at least through adolescence. In fact, the brain's ongoing plasticity enables it to continually resculpt and reshape itself in response to new environmental demands well into adulthood.

Id. at 391.

[18]REYNOLDS, *supra* note 13.

[19]*Id.*

[20]Goal 8 of the National Education Goals that were in place for 2000 included universal promotion of "partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children," with the partnerships to support both "the academic work of children at home and shared educational decisionmaking at school." NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS PANEL, *supra* note 11, at 13.

Goal 6 (Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning) also showed a recognition of the need that is often present for assistance to the whole family. The relevant objective was:

> Schools, in implementing comprehensive parent involvement programs, will offer more adult literacy, parent training and lifelong learning opportunities to improve the ties between home and school, and enhance parents' work and home lives.

Id. at 12.

[21]*See infra* notes 208-14 and accompanying text.

[22]Parent involvement is largely within the control of the schools. *See infra* notes 192-98 and accompanying text.

[23]Gary B. Melton et al., *Changing Schools for Changing Families, in* TRANSITION, *supra* note 7, at 179, 188 (citations omitted).

[24]The long-standing global trend toward increasing geographic concentration of poverty was reversed in the United States during the economic boom of the 1990s. Alemayehu Bishaw, Areas with Concentrated Poverty: 1999 (July 2005) (special report of the U.S. Census Bureau).

[25]In a conference sponsored by the National Research Council, Gary Orfield provided the following summary:

> Almost everything that matters is aligned with the poverty concentration, which is aligned with the racial concentration. The peer group separation is different. The parent educational background is different. The quality of the facilities is usually different. The

concentration of language minority and handicapped children who require special services is different.

> The educational background of the teachers is different. The likelihood that substitute teachers will be there is different. The probability that teachers are teaching in their field is different. The course offerings are different. The college-going rates are different. The graduation rates are different. All of these things are related to segregation in a serious way.

HIGH STANDARDS, *supra* note 1, at 53.

A committee of the National Research Council concluded that programs of remediation and reform rarely have an impact on schools in which more than two-fifths of the students are from low-income families. COMMITTEE ON A FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR A STRATEGIC EDUCATION RESEARCH PROGRAM, IMPROVING STUDENT LEARNING: A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR EDUCATION RESEARCH AND ITS UTILIZATION 48 (1999) [hereinafter IMPROVING STUDENT LEARNING].

[26]Behavior that appears to be "ignorant" often is instead a reflection of complex social norms. As participants in a workshop of the National Academies observed:

> ...[F]or young people, most conflicts with their peers are about issues of friendship and perceived betrayal, relationships, and cliques; young people worry about being accepted.... In multiracial, multiethnic settings, conflicts may appear to be about intergroup differences, but they are often about issues among friends. It is also important to point out, however, that issues that surface among friends who happen to come from different backgrounds can also be perceived by others, and even eventually by themselves, as being racially or ethnically motivated.

FORUM ON ADOLESCENCE, IMPROVING INTERGROUP RELATIONS AMONG YOUTH 9 (2000).

As in other contexts discussed in this report, the participants in the Academies workshop noted that the major lesson that the schools can teach about racial and ethnic-group relations is in the institutional response to such differences. Whatever formal curriculum exists in regard to racial tolerance is inevitably dwarfed by students' own experience:

> School policies and practices can strongly influence intergroup relations. These include tracking, which usually offers differentiated classroom opportunities for studnets who demonstrate different learning styles or levels of achievement; cooperative learning projects, which can lead to the development of positive relations; extracurricular activities, such as sports and community service; specially designed multicultural curricular materials; and programs like school-wide assemblies. In addition, the overall institutional tone toward promoting intergroup relations can have an influence: some schools are rigid, and others are much more open to new ideas.

Id. at 12.

> ...[Connie] Flanagan and her team found that young people learn a great deal at home about other people's rights, responsibility to others, anger and disrespect to others, values, how the self is linked with notions of public good, and public awareness about prejudice. Students who reported that they have experienced prejudice, or that someone close to them has, are less likely to believe that America is a just society. Their personal experiences are as important as are school and community influences. Young people who felt that their teachers were fair and would intervene in acts of intolerance were more likely to think of America as a just society. In addition, if they felt that the police in their community were fair, they were more likely to think of America as a just society.

Id. at 22.

[27]In general, the most effective public health strategies are ones that involve environmental manipulations in which safe behavior becomes easy or, conversely, risky behavior becomes improbable or simply less risky. Thus, for example, changing to padded dashboards required no behavioral change, but it substantially reduced injuries in automobile accidents. Similarly, fluoridation of water probably reduced dental caries far more than education in the virtues of flossing, and each increase in cigarette taxes reduces the likelihood that young people will begin smoking. *See generally* Richard J. Bonnie, *The Efficacy of Law as a Paternalistic Instrument, in* 33 NEB. SYMP. ON MOTIVATION: THE LAW AS A BEHAVIORAL INSTRUMENT 131 (Gary B. Melton ed., 1985).

[28]*See* Lee Ross, *The Intuitive Psychologist and His Shortcomings: Distortions in the Attribution Process, in* 10 ADVANCES IN EXPERIMENTAL SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY 173 (Leonard Berkowitz ed., 1977).

[29]Of course, I do not intend to imply that education is irrelevant to the creation of wealth and the reduction of inequality. *See infra* notes 95-96 and citations therein. Nonetheless, it is disingenuous to ignore the overwhelming evidence that personal wealth is commonly in substantial part the result of accidents of birth—good fortune about the place of one's birth and the educational opportunities that one's parents were in a position to provide.

[30]Psychological factors in the etiology of child maltreatment are weak. Most often, however, the principal problems are motivational, not cognitive. Most often, children are neglected when their parents feel helpless to do anything about their current situation and when they in fact do lack instrumental resources that would enable them to cope or to avoid the problem altogether. For example, it is difficult to care for children in inadequate or unsafe housing, and the more intractable that the family's own situation objectively is, the more risk that there is to children. *See generally* GARY B. MELTON ET AL., PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATIONS FOR THE COURTS: A HANDBOOK FOR MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS AND LAWYERS § 15.03(d) (2d ed. 1997).

[31]To avoid an erroneous impression, it is important to note that broad-based programs of family support (e.g., those involved in home visitation for families of infants) are sometimes labeled *parent education*. As I am using the term, I am referring to didactic approaches (i.e., parent education *classes*).

[32]*See generally* Leroy Pelton, *The Role of Material Factors in Child Abuse and Neglect, in* PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM ABUSE AND NEGLECT: FOUNDATIONS FOR A NEW NATIONAL STRATEGY 131 (Gary B. Melton & Frank D. Barry eds., 1994) (discussing the evidence that poverty in general and specific unmet material needs—e.g., inadequate and unsafe housing—substantially increases the risk of child maltreatment).

[33]*See generally* ROSS A. THOMPSON, PREVENTING CHILD MALTREATMENT THROUGH SOCIAL SUPPORT: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS (1995); Susan P. Limber & Patricia Y. Hashima, *The Social Context: What Comes Naturally in Child Protection, in* TOWARD A CHILD-CENTERED, NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM 41 (Gary B. Melton et al. eds., 2002).

[34]There are two principal problems in use of parent education to achieve sustainable outcomes in child behavior. First, to the extent that parent behavior is a causal factor, it is more directly affected by the situational incentives and constraints. A class *about* parental behavior is typically far removed from real-life parental behavior. In vivo practice is needed. *See, e.g.*, Dewey G. Cornell, What Works in Youth Violence Prevention 6 (Apr. 25, 1999) (report of the Virginia Youth Violence Project criticizing use of brief courses to change well-established interactional patterns). Second, parental practices may be conceptually distant from outcomes of most interest to the schools. E.g., even when there is evidence for change in parental behavior as a result of relatively well designed parent education, such success has generally not been shown to affect children's educational achievement or social behavior. Katherine Magnuson & Greg J. Duncan, Parent- vs. Child-based Intervention Strategies for Promoting Children's Well-Being (Sept. 4, 2002) (paper presented at a conference in Chicago on Family Investments in Children's Potential).

[35]*See, e.g.*, Robert J. Sampson et al., *Beyond Social Capital: Spatial Dynamics of Collective Efficacy for Children*, 64 AM. SOC. REV. 633 (1999); Robert J. Sampson et al., *Neighborhoods and Violent Crime: A Multilevel Study of Collective Efficacy*, 277 SCI. 918 (1997); Elizabeth Frankenberg, Sometimes It Takes a Village: Collective Efficacy and Children's Use of Preventive Health Care (2004) (Calif. Ctr. for Pop. Research On-Line Working Paper Series, Paper No. CCPR-028-04) (available at http://repositories.cdlib.org/ccpr/olwp/CCPR-028-04).

[36]*See* Pelton, *supra* note 32, at 153.

[37]An excellent illustration of this approach is Strong Communities for Children in the Golden Strip, http://www.clemson.edu/strongcommunities. Funded by a generous grant by The Duke Endowment to the Clemson University Research Foundation, Strong Communities is a movement that unites more than 3000 individuals and hundreds of organizations in southern Greenville County and adjoining communities in Anderson and Laurens counties. Strong Communities, http://www.clemson.edu/strongcommunities, is based on the principles suggested for comprehensive prevention programs by the U.S. ADVISORY BOARD ON CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT, NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS: A NEW NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN (1993). In general, Strong Communities illustrates a rights-oriented approach to program design and evaluation. *See* Gary B. Melton, *Treating Children Like People: A Framework for Research*, 34 J. CLIN. CHILD & ADOLESCENT PSYCHOL. ___ (2005).

[38]*See generally* JOY G. DRYFOOS, FULL-SERVICE SCHOOLS: A REVOLUTION IN HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES (1994).

[39]The integration of efforts to obtain material and social resources, *see, e.g., supra* note 37, is a sensible way of supporting parents in promotion of children's own safe and healthy environment. An example of such an approach is multisystemic therapy for families of troubled youth. *See, e.g.,* SCOTT W. HENGGELER ET AL., SERIOUS EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCE IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS: MULTISYSTEMIC THERAPY (2002); SCOTT W. HENGGELER ET AL., MULTISYSTEMIC TREATMENT OF ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOR IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS (1998); CYNTHIA CUPIT SWENSON ET AL., MULTISYSTEMIC THERAPY AND NEIGHBORHOOD PARTNERSHIPS: REDUCING ADOLESCENT VIOLENCE AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE (2005).

[40]One widely accepted myth on point is the assumption that maltreatment of child commonly occurs because their parents have erroneous beliefs about developmental norms. Therefore, it is often asserted, the parents set expectations unrealistically high, they then become frustrated by the child's unwillingness (inability) to fulfill the rules, and they respond punitively to perceived misbehavior that is actually developmentally appropriate. However, research suggests that parents who abuse or neglect their children actually tend to set expectations too high for *themselves*, not their children. Mindy S. Rosenberg & N. Dickon Reppucci, *Abusive Mothers: Perceptions of Their Own and Their Children's Behavior,* 51 J. CONSULTING & CLIN. PSYCHOL. 674 (1983).

Psychological factors in the etiology of child maltreatment are in fact quite weak; there is no known profile of acceptable validity. DAVID A. WOLFE, CHILD ABUSE: IMPLICATIONS FOR CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND PSYCHOPATHOLOGY 69 (1987). To the extent that psychological factors do play a role, the general picture, as in the study by Rosenberg & Reppucci, *supra*, is one of depression, with parents not perceiving themselves competent to care adequately for their children in the face of seemingly overwhelming stressors and thus withdrawing or, much less commonly, acting aggressively from frustration. Pelton, *supra* note 32, at 153. This perspective sometimes results from life circumstances that in fact are unusually difficult. *Id.* at 154-59.

[41]Jacqueline S. Eccles & Rena D. Harold, *Family Involvement in Children's and Adolescents' Schooling, in* FAMILY-SCHOOL LINKS: HOW DO THEY AFFECT EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES? 3 (Alan Booth & Judith F. Dunn eds., 1996). *See, e.g.,* Lee Shumow et al., *Harsh, Firm, and Permissive Parenting in Low-Income Families: Relations to Children's Academic Achievement and Behavioral Adjustment,* 19 J. FAM. ISSUES 483 (1998) (harsh parenting is associated with lower academic achievement).

[42]*See* Sandra L. Christenson, *Families and Schools: What Is the Role of the School Psychologist?,* 10 SCHOOL PSYCHOL. Q. 118 (1995) (family process variables, such as the consistency of household routines and the discussion of homework, are more important in children's school performance than is family social status).

[43]As Eccles and Harold, *supra* note 41, summarized, "The strongest predictors [of parent participation]...are the specific school programs and teacher practices being used (or not used) to encourage parent involvement: When parents feel schools are doing things to involve them, they are more involved in their children's education." *Id.* at 10. *See, e.g.,* Joyce L. Epstein & Susan

L. Dauber, *School Programs and Teacher Practices of Parent Involvement in Inner-City Elementary and Middle Schools*, 91 ELEM. SCHOOL J. 289 (1991); Kathleeen V. Hoover-Dempsey & Howard M. Sandler, *Why Do Parents Become Involved in Their Children's Education?*, 67 REV. EDUC. RESEARCH 3 (1997).

[44]Joyce Epstein has articulated a highly influential typology of parent involvement in the schools. *See, e.g.*, Joyce L. Epstein, *School/Family/Community Partnerships: Caring for the Children We Share*, 76 PHI DELTA KAPPAN 701 (1995). The six types of parent involvement that Prof. Epstein has noted include: *communication* between home and school; the school's assistance in *parenting*; parents' assistance in promoting *student learning*; parents' *volunteering* in school activities; parents' involvement in *school decision making and advocacy*; schools' *collaborating* with community agencies and organizations. This categorization provided the framework for the National PTA's standards for family-school relations. NATIONAL PTA, NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR PARENT/FAMILY INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMS: AN IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE FOR SCHOOL COMMUNITIES (rev. ed. 2004). The Epstein typology also guided the development of recommendations by the Parent Involvement Task Force established by the South Carolina Education Accountability Act of 1998. Parent Involvement Task Force, Report and Recommendations to the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee (Oct. 15, 1999).

[45]*See supra* notes 42-43 and citations therein.

[46]Melton et al., *supra* note 23, at 186-88 and citations therein. Of course, beliefs about parenthood and childhood are important in development of child and family policy and related professional practice more generaly. *See supra* notes 58-63.

[47]Melton et al., *supra* note 23, at 183.

[48]The general principle that parental participation is causally related to educational achievement, *see id.* and citations therein, applies to adolescents in secondary schools just as it does to children in the primary grades. *See* Karen Bogenschneider, *Parental Involvement in Adolescent Schooling: A Proximal Process with Transcontextual Validity*, 59 J.MARRIAGE & FAM. 718 (1997).

[49]Zill, *supra* note 12, at 77-78.

[50]Sandra L. Christenson, *Families and Schools: Rights, Responsibilities, Resources, and Relationships, in* TRANSITION, *supra* note 7, at 143, 153.

[51]Gary B. Melton, Statement Before the Senate Education Committee and the Joint Legislative Committee on Children and Families, South Carolina General Assembly, on the Subject of School Safety (Mar. 30, 1994), at 4.

[52]*Id.* at 4-5. The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, *see infra* note 53, is illustrative in its focus on systemic change within the school and the community.

[53]COMMITTEE ON CASE STUDIES OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE, DEADLY LESSONS: UNDERSTANDING LETHAL SCHOOL VIOLENCE 317-18 (2003) (report of a committee of the National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine). By far the best studied program of bullying prevention is the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, which has been independently assessed as effective by several agencies in the U.S. Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, and Justice. *See* DAN OLWEUS, BULLYING AT SCHOOL: WHAT WE KNOW AND WHAT WE CAN DO (1993); DAN OLWEUS & SUSAN P. LIMBER, 9 BLUEPRINTS FOR VIOLENCE

PREVENTION: BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAM (1999) (volume in a series of federally supported monographs describing exemplary programs for prevention or treatment of delinquent behavior). The Olweus program was developed in Norway by a psychologist at the University of Bergen, and adapted, implemented, and evaluated in the United States by faculty of the Institute on Family and Neighborhood Life (IFNL) at Clemson University and the Institute for Families in Society at the University of South Carolina. The principles in the Olweus program have been applied in a national public information campaign undertaken by the Health Research and Services Administration in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and aimed at "tweens." *See* http://stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov. For this extensive body of program development, evaluation research, and public service, the American Psychological Association awarded its prestigious Award for Contributions to Psychology in the Public Interest to Susan P. Limber, a professor in IFNL.

Unlike the widely available—but generally unevaluated or unsuccessful—curricular programs for prevention of bullying, the Olweus Program involves mobilization of the entire school (students, teachers, support staff, etc.) in an effort to establish social norms of intolerance of bullying and protection of actual or potential victims. It is common to include a school steering committee, public information campaign, and regular classroom meetings. To use conventional jargon of crime prevention, there is also "hardening of the targets" (notably, a concerted effort to eliminate or substantially reduce unsupervised settings or times of day within the school).

For information about the Olweus program, related educational materials (including a video produced by South Carolina Educational Television for classroom use), and training in the implementation of the program, contact nobully@clemson.edu.

[54]*See* Susan P. Limber, Bullying Prevention and Intervention in a Post-Columbine Era (Aug. 2004) (paper presented at the meeting of the American Psychological Association, Honolulu). Curricular approaches are ill-matched to the dynamics of bullying. Children already know that bullying is wrong, but norms are often not in place to enable them to follow that concept to its logical conclusion is practice. Peer mediation is also inapposite, because it conveys the message that bullying is an interpersonal problem to mediate, not simply a matter of misbehavior by one child toward another. Mediation also provides another venue in which the bully can dominate the victim.

[55]Gary B. Melton, *Children, Politics, and Morality: The Ethics of Child Advocacy*, 16 J. CLIN. CHILD PSYCHOL. 357, 360 (1987) (citations omitted).

[56]The proportion of school-aged children in the United States who are overweight grew from 6% in 1976-80 to 16% in 1999-2000. This problem is especially severe among ethnic-minority children, particularly Hispanic Americans. FEDERAL INTERAGENCY FORUM ON CHILD AND FAMILY STATISTICS, AMERICA'S CHILDREN: KEY NATIONAL INDICATORS OF WELL-BEING (2005) [hereinafter AMERICA'S CHILDREN], at http://www.childstats.gov/americaschildren (Indicator HEALTH3).

[57]*See, e.g.*, BARBARA J. NELSON, MAKING AN ISSUE OF CHILD ABUSE: POLITICAL AGENDA SETTING FOR SOCIAL PROBLEMS (1990).

[58]AD COUNCIL, TURNING POINT: ENGAGING THE PUBLIC ON BEHALF OF CHILDREN 27 (2004). Interestingly and fortunately, however, the descriptors of the individual children whom the respondents know best were strongly positive. *Id.* at 28-29.

The belief that children and adolescents are typically "wild" and "irresponsible" and that they ultimately will be unable to carry the country forward was predominant by the 1990s. *See, e.g.*, Meg Bostrom, Discipline and Development: A Meta-Analysis of Public Perceptions of Parents, Parenting, Child Development and Child Abuse 6 (May 2003) (report prepared for Prevent Child Abuse America).

This belief is illustrated in South Carolina by the fact that only about half of parents of school-aged children express agreement with the statement, "Students at my child's school are well behaved." South Carolina Education Oversight Committee, Results of the 2004 Parent Survey 19 (Apr. 2005) [hereinafter Parent Survey].

[59]*Id.* at 29-30.

[60]*Id.* at 30.

[61]Kevin T. Kilpatrick, Reframing Child Abuse and Neglect for Increased Understanding and Engagement: Defining the Need for Strategic Reframing 8 (2004) (report prepared for Prevent Child Abuse America).

[62]Bostrom, *supra* note 58, at 5-6.

[63]*Id.* at 6-7. Mirroring the inconsistency of the public's views of children in general and the children whom they know best, almost all parents perceive themselves as doing at least as well in childrearing as their own parents did, *see supra* note 56, but the majority believe that parents as a whole are doing a worse job than their predecessors. Bostrom, *id.*, at 7.

[64]*See supra* note 46.

[65]*See, e.g.*, Melton et al., *supra* note 23, at 187-88, and citations therein.

[66]DAVID MATHEWS, IS THERE A PUBLIC FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS? 41 (1996).

[67]*Id.* Although the perceptions of institutional ineptitude and of chaos in the lives of children and adolescents may reflect personal experience, they are, no doubt, fed by the stories that the media tell and the slogans that politicians—and sometimes educators themselves—use. As illustrated by the enormously inflated perceptions of risk to children from sexual predators and to the community from violent juveniles that are present among the general public, including young parents themselves, such distortions of reality by opinion leaders stimulate parallel or even spiraling trends in community fear. *See generally* BARRY GLASSNER, THE CULTURE OF FEAR: WHY AMERICANS ARE AFRAID OF THE WRONG THINGS (2000). For a thoughtful personal account on this point from a parent's perspective, see Jenny Gitlitz, *Weighing the Dangers*, BERKSHIRE EAGLE, Aug. 13, 2004, at A11.

[68]The perception of administrative support for outreach is particularly potent. *See, e.g.*, Melton et al., *supra* note 23, at 188-89, and citations therein.

[69]The child poverty rate has remained relatively constant since 1980. The proportion of children whose families are living in extreme poverty (an income less than one-half of the poverty level) was the same in 2003 (7%) that it was in 1980, and the percentage of families living in poverty at all fluctuated during the period between 16% and 22%. The 2003 poverty rate for families with children was 17%, only slightly below the rate in 1980.

On the other hand, the proportion of families with medium incomes (200-399% of the poverty threshold) fell from 41% to 32%, and the percentage with high incomes (at least 400% of the poverty threshold; i.e., $75,240 for a family of four in 2003) rose accordingly from 17% to 29%. The proportion with very high incomes (at least 600% of the poverty threshold) more than tripled from 1980 (4%) to 2003 (13%).

Unless otherwise noted, these and other national population statistics in this section are drawn from AMERICA'S CHILDREN, *supra* note 56.

[70]Only three-fifths of U.S. children in 2003 were White, non-Hispanic, down from three-fourths in 1980. The proportion who are Hispanic American grew from 9% in 1980 to 19% in 2003, a figure that is expected to increase by about five more percentage points in the coming 15 years. The percentage of U.S. children with at least one foreign-born parent grew from 15% to 20% between 1994 and 2004. Approximately 4% of U.S. children themselves are foreign-born with at least one foreign-born parent. In 2003, 19% of all U.S. children (about two-thirds of Asian American and Hispanic American children) spoke a language other than English at home.

The recent growth in Hispanic immigration in South Carolina has been dramatic. For example, the growth in the Hispanic population in Greenville County alone grew by about 6,000 (approximately 40%) between 2000 and 2004 (now officially about 5% of the county's population, perhaps a substantial undercount). Ashley Fletcher, *Immigrants Fuel Greenville Growth*, GREENVILLE NEWS, Apr. 15, 2005. The county's Hispanic population had almost quadrupled between 1990 and 2000, so that about 50% of the foreign-born population in the county in 2000 was from Latin America. *Id.* The remainder were nearly evenly divided between people of European and Asian origin. *Id.*

Between 2000 and 2002, the number of Hispanic American children in the Greenville County Schools doubled, a rate of growth that is obviously much faster than is reflected in the federal census. Ron Barnett, *Hispanic Presence Grows in Upstate,* GREENVILLE NEWS, Sept. 18, 2003, at 1A, 6A.

The Hispanic American population itself is diverse. According to the 2000 census, only a slight majority (about 56%) of Hispanic South Carolinians were of Mexican origin. Jason Zacher, *Growth a Chance to Show Clout, Hispanics Say,* GREENVILLE NEWS, June 20, 2003, at 1A.

[71]HIGH STANDARDS, *supra* note 1, at 25. AMERICA'S CHILDREN, *supra* note 56, indicated no change in the achievement gap across ethnic groups in the last decade of data collection (from 1992 to 2002 or 2003) at grades 4, 8, and 12, except between Whites and African Americans in mathematics at grade 4. The achievement gap reflects persisting ethnic-group differences in income and wealth. In 2003, 10% of White children lived in poverty, only about one-third of the proportion among African American and Hispanic American children.

South Carolina statistics are roughly comparable in relation to the relative risk experienced by ethnic-minority children and the magnitude of the achievement gap. *See generally* South Carolina Department of Education, Report of the African-American Student Achievement Committee and Work Groups (May 30, 2001).

For a sobering overview of the continuing disadvantages experienced by African American children in South Carolina and a thoughtful analysis of the steps that should be taken to rectify the situation, see Barbara Morrison-Rodriguez, *Twenty-six Steps to Article 27: The Example of African American Children in South Carolina, in* IMPLEMENTING THE U.N. CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD: A STANDARD OF LIVING ADEQUATE FOR DEVELOPMENT 197 (Arlene Bowers Andrews & Natalie Hevener Kaufman eds., 1999).

[72]HIGH STANDARDS, *supra* note 1, at 71.

Housing segregation is still a reality in many communities, even though it is not legally enforced. A recent Gallup Poll showed that "Americans tend to live in neighborhoods largely populated by people of similar racial or ethnic backgrounds—86% of non-Hispanic whites, 66% of blacks, and 61% of Hispanics report living in aras where there are many people from their own backgrounds." Joseph Carroll, Who Are the People in Your Neighborhood? (July 12, 2005) (brief report from The Gallup Organization).

[73]Four of the 10 least segregated metropolitan areas in the United States are in South Carolina. Eric Schmitt, *Segregation Growing Among U.S. Children*, N.Y. TIMES ON THE WEB, May 6, 2001.

[74]According to the latest South Carolina Department of Education statistics available on the Internet, eight school districts in the state had more than 90% ethnic-minority students. The cross-district variation in White enrollment within counties with multiple districts was more than 30 percentage points in 10 counties (i.e., Bamberg, 1.8%-40.2%; Barnwell, 22.6%-54.0%; Clarendon, 3.0%-57.1%; Dorchester, 27.9%-66.9%; Florence, 12.4%-66.6%; Hampton, 2.1%-43.8%; Lexington, 53.5%-87.6%; Orangeburg, 8.4%-46.8%; Spartanburg, 33.7%-83.1%; York, 57.7%-85.8%. Office of Research, South Carolina Department of Education, Pupils in South Carolina Schools, 2003-04 (Nov. 2004), *at* http://www.myschools.com/offices/research/getpage.cfm?id=1458.

[75]Lydia Saad, Americans Mostly Upbeat About Current Race Relations (July 14, 2005) (brief report from The Gallup Organization).

[76]Consider, e.g., the membership of the U.S. Senate, where there are one African American and one Hispanic American. Analogously, since Reconstruction, no African Americans have held statewide elective office in South Carolina.

[77]Raksha Arora, Minorities Still Struggle to Meet Basic Needs 1 (July 26, 2005) (analysis of Gallup Poll data; brief report by The Gallup Organization).

[78]*Id.* at 2.

[79]*Id.*

[80]*Id.* at 3.

[81]*Id.* (emphasis added).

[82]*See generally* AMERICA'S CHILDREN, *supra* note 56.

Demographic variables (especially social class), achievement motivation, time management, identification with the culture of origin, and identification with U.S. culture together account for about 40% of the variance in school achievement of children of immigrants. Pedro R. Portes, *Social and Psychological Factors in the Academic Achievement of Children of Immigrants: A Cultural History Puzzle*, 36 AM. EDUC. RESEARCH J. 489, 498-99 (1999). Although children in some contemporary immigrant groups (Asian; Cuban) stand out for their educational achievement, ethnicity per se is weakly related to achievement when controls are added for demographic and psychosocial factors. *Id.* at 498. High achievement is associated with ideologies related to relatively little history of discrimination, high achievement motivation, and moderate identification with both the culture of origin and the mainstream U.S. culture (in effect, positive self-regard). *Id.* at 501-02.

[83]*See, e.g.*, Cindy Landrum, *State Wants More Funds for International Students*, GREENVILLE NEWS, Mar. 18, 2002, at 1B; Liz Osby, *Hispanic Society Booming in State*, GREENVILLE NEWS, May 24, 2002, at 1A (describing shortages in education, health, and law enforcement services for Hispanic residents); Dale Perry, *Training Teachers a Hurdle to Educating Hispanics*, GREENVILLE NEWS, Oct. 29, 2001, at 1B; Dale Perry, *Hispanic Kids Have Long Ride to English Class*, GREENVILLE NEWS, Apr. 20, 2001, at 1A.

[84]Betty Chafin Rash & Bill McCoy, Social Capital Benchmark Survey: Executive Summary for the Charlotte Region 14 (Feb. 28, 2001) (report to the Foundation for the Carolinas). Analyzing this finding, Rash and McCoy commented:

> The Hispanic issue, which has been quietly dormant, is likely to become a significant social problem in this community. Hispanics essentially have no ties to the larger community because of language problems, their temporary residential status, their being here illegally, or some other reason. Whatever the cause, it is difficult to think that this large population group with almost no ties to the community can continue to co-exist with the rest of us without significant social problems surfacing. Some would say the social problems have already surfaced, but that most of us have failed to recognize this situation.

Id. at 26.

[85]*See supra* note 83.

[86]*See generally* ON THE FRONTIER OF ADULTHOOD: THEORY, RESEARCH, AND PUBLIC POLICY (Frank F. Furstenberg et al. eds., 2005) *and* ON YOUR OWN WITHOUT A NET (D. Wayne Osgood et al. eds., forthcoming) (reports of a network of scholars convened by the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation to study Transitions to Adulthood and summarized at http://www.transad.pop.upenn.edu); Lev Grossman, *Grow Up? Not So Fast*, TIME, Jan. 24, 2005, at 42 (cover story).

[87]Although the problem of full integration of young adults into the community is an issue of global proportions, the development and implementation of an adequate response to the growth of the information economy is an especially challenging task for South Carolina in at

least two ways. First, because of the historic importance of manufacturing and agriculture in the state's economy—and, even more so, types of industry and agricultural production that required minimal formal education for a large proportion of workers—the transitions that are necessary for South Carolina communities' successful adaptation to the needs of young adults often involve almost revolutionary change. I do not mean to imply that such change is impossible. The Upstate's ongoing transition from dependence on textile manufacturing to a world-class center for automotive and aircraft industries and related information technology is illustrative. The success stories give some reason for optimism, but they do not negate the difficulty of the challenge that the need for structural change presents in the regions of the state with less economic and human capital, notwithstanding the good will that may be present.

The second point is related to the first. As illustrated by surveys even in the Charlotte area, one of the prototypical examples (with metropolitan Atlanta and the Research Triangle) of "New South" race relations and economic transformation, social capital (the collective "wealth" in relationships) is substantially smaller than in metropolitan areas in other parts of the country. (The one exception relates to the strength of faith-based organizations.) *See* Rash & McCoy, *supra* note 84.

This relative weakness of community institutions is apt to be more pronounced in South Carolina. At least in part because of the heritage of paternalism embedded in plantation culture in the Pee Dee and Low Country regions and in mill towns in much of the remainder of the state, the network of community organizations that can orchestrate change when necessary in many U.S. communities is weak in many South Carolina towns and rural communities. For a quick illustration of this point, readers might search the Yellow Pages for "Associations" in South Carolina towns picked at random, especially from the rural regions of the state.

[88]A search of the World Wide Web conducted on August 10, 2005, via Google Scholar (the version of Google that scans only academic sources) for "digital divide" elicited 11,300 hits.

[89]*See supra* note 69.

[90]*See generally* Gary B. Melton, *Personal Satisfaction and the Welfare of Families, Communities, and Society,* 42 NEB. SYMP. ON MOTIVATION: THE INDIVIDUAL, THE FAMILY, AND SOCIAL GOOD: PERSONAL FULFILLMENT IN TIMES OF CHANGE ix (Gary B. Melton ed., 1995) (discussing the cultural change toward behavior based on the motivation to experience personal fulfillment, not the need to adhere to role obligations). The shift toward taking time for oneself before assuming family obligations has been especially profound for groups for whom the job market has opened meaningfully only in the past generation (e.g., women and, to a lesser degree, people of color, especially those who are highly educated).

It is quite possible that the dramatic growth in the 1990s in information technology and related industries was enabled by the cultural changes already underway. Although the shift since the mid-1960s toward concern with personal fulfillment has appeared to have some negative effects (e.g., greater family instability), among the likely positive effects are (a) reinforcement of entrepreneurial activity and related creativity and risk-taking (including development of new, flexible corporate cultures) and (b) the expansion of the available human

capital (including brainpower of women and ethnic minorities who had previously been excluded from the professional workforce).

In other words, the development of an information economy has resulted in new occupational forms, including substantially reduced loyalty by and to major employers. However, the development of information technology has been enabled or at least facilitated by greater use of contract labor (e.g., employees can network with colleagues, even those thousands of miles away, from their own home study at any time of day or night) and temporary employment (e.g., to be competitive in the marketplace, employers want and maybe even need the ability to change their workforce easily to reflect technological developments and related shifts in demand for their products).

[91]Grossman, *supra* note 86, at 44.

[92]TIME, Jan. 24, 2005 (cover page).

[93]The proportion of the population who attend college grew by more than half during the past generation. Grossman, *supra* note 86, at 45.

[94]There are many examples that are familiar to everyone. For example, the mechanic who repairs automobiles, the technician who adjusts home heating and cooling systems, and the printer who composes or actually produces the newspaper are all apt to devote much of their work life to computer programming and software debugging.

[95]*See* BARBARA SCHNEIDER & DAVID STEVENSON, THE AMBITIOUS GENERATION: AMERICA'S TEENAGERS, MOTIVATED BUT DIRECTIONLESS 72-73 (1999). The education gap in wages has grown substantially over the past half-century, largely because of a decline in real wages of workers without any higher education. *Id.*

[96]Grossman, *supra* note 86, at 45.

[97]JEFFREY J. ARNETT, EMERGING ADULTHOOD: THE WINDING ROAD FROM THE LATE TEENS THROUGH THE TWENTIES 146 (2004). About half of 20-somethings have held multiple jobs in the past three years. Grossman, *supra* note 86, at 47.

[98]Almost one-fourth of 18- to 29-year-olds report having had at least four addresses in the past five years. *Id.*

[99]Amid such employment instability, job security and health benefits are more likely to be valued by 20-somethings than are interesting work and a good salary. *Id.* Only half have employer-paid health insurance. *Id.* at 52.

[100]*Id.* at 48.

[101]*Id.*

[102]*The Financial State of Young Adults in America,* S.C. EXTENSION FAM. & CONSUMER SCIS. NEWSLETTER, Aug. 2004 [hereinafter *Financial State*], at 2 (presenting a summary by Jonathan Zaff, president of the Washington-based advocacy organization, 18 to 35).

[103]*Id.*

[104]*Id.*

[105]*Id.*

[106]*See generally* A. BARON HOLMES, YOUNG ADULTS IN SOUTH CAROLINA: A COMPREHENSIVE REPORT ON THE LIVES OF SOUTH CAROLINIANS AGES 18 TO 29 (2000) (a report of the South Carolina Kids Count Project).

[107]Brett V. Brown et al., *A Statistical Portrait of Well-Being in Early Childhood*, 2 CROSS CURRENTS 2 (2004).

[108]Of families headed by an 18- to 24-year-old without related children, 10.0% (5.8% of married couples fitting this description) lived in poverty in 2003. U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey: 2004 Annual Social and Economic Supplement (Table POV04). The corresponding statistic for families headed by an 18- to 24-year-old with children is 41.6% (20.3% of married children). *Id.* *See* Holmes, *supra* note 106, at 19-23.

[109]The unemployment rate among young adults is about two to three times as great as that among older workers. *Financial State*, *supra* note 102, at 1.

[110]South Carolina has the fifth highest rate of incarceration in adult prisons and jails in the United States (555 inmates/100,000 residents). Paige M. Harrison & Allen J. Beck, *Prison and Jail Inmates at Midyear 2004*, BUREAU JUST. STAT. BULL., Apr. 2005, at 1. Between 2000 and 2003, the number of inmates in South Carolina correctional facilities rose by 17.4%. *Id.* at 6. The number of inmates in the South Carolina Department of Corrections is now almost seven times greater than it was 30 years ago. South Carolina Department of Corrections, Average Daily Inmate Population, Fiscal Year 1970-2004 (Jan. 12, 2005).

[111]According to inmates' self-reports on admission, 60% of male inmates and 80% of female inmates in the South Carolina Department of Corrections are parents. South Carolina Department of Corrections, Profile of Inmates in Institutional Count (Including Inmates on Authorized Absence) as of June 30, 2004 (Sept. 13, 2004), at 1. The proportion who are parents among newly admitted inmates in FY 2004 was virtually identical. South Carolina Department of Corrections, Profile of FY 2004 Admissions (n.d.), at 1.

[112]When controls are added for other social and economic variables, parental home ownership still is highly related to children's math and reading achievement and modestly related to their frequency of behavior problems. Donald R. Haurin et al., *Does Homeownership Affect Child Outcomes?*, 30 REAL ESTATE ECONOMICS 635 (2002). The mechanism is believed to be the incentive that home owners have to invest in the neighborhood, in part through membership in community organizations and corollary development of supportive social ties.

[113]*See generally* ROBERT D. PUTNAM, BOWLING ALONE (2000). *See also* FRANCIS FUKUYAMA, THE GREAT DISRUPTION: HUMAN NATURE AND THE RECONSTITUTION OF SOCIAL ORDER (1999), *and* FRANCIS FUKUYAMA, TRUST: THE SOCIAL VIRTUES AND THE CREATION OF PROSPERITY (1995) (arguing that the global social order is being transformed and that trust, a critical element in building the conditions for economic prosperity, is endangered).

[114]*See generally* DISAFFECTED DEMOCRACIES: WHAT'S TROUBLING THE TRILATERAL COUNTRIES? (Susan J. Pharr & Robert D. Putnam eds., 2000).

[115]PUTNAM, *supra* note 113, at 247-76.

[116]*See* http://gseis.ucla.edu/heri/heri.html.

[117]Lori J. Vogelgesang & Alexander W. Astin, Post-College Civic Engagement Among Graduates (Apr. 2005) (Research Report No. 2, Higher Education Research Institute, University of California, Los Angeles).

[118]Gary B. Melton, *It's Time for Neighborhood Research and Action*, 16 CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT 909 (1992).

[119]Principal collaborators in this research, sponsored by The Duke Endowment, included James McDonell of IFNL at Clemson, Kenneth Dodge of the Sanford Institute at Duke University, and Deborah Daro of the Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago. The survey was implemented by Westat The data analysis is now being completed in preparation for submission of a report of the findings for publication.

[120]Only about 45% of the parents who responded to the survey said that they know the names of the majority of children living in the 10 closest homes. Gary B. Melton, Some Key Findings from the Evaluation Studies: Strong Communities at Age 3 (May 26, 2005) (report to The Duke Endowment, at 18. Only about one-third of that group (roughly 18% overall) claimed to know most of the nearby children. *Id.* Parents also reported that both giving and receiving help were rare events among families in their community. *Id.*

[121]Prof. Putnam's concerns about "bowling alone" are even more acute among children and adolescents than among adults. Youth development organizations have had sagging enrollments, PUTNAM, *supra* note 113, at 59, and team sports and sandlot games have given way to individual sports and organized activities. *Id.* at 109-14.

[122]*See infra* notes 150-152.

[123]In work that is now a classic in educational philosophy, John Dewey discriminated between democracy as a system of government and as a way of life—"a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience." JOHN DEWEY, DEMOCRACY AND EDUCATION: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION 87 (Free Press ed., 1997) (original work published in 1916).

It is the latter (i.e., a self-governing community typified by respect for one another and engagement in a marketplace of ideas) that is more directly related to education and indeed that is the defining element of the American experience. As Toqueville perceptively observed early in the 19th century, the unique aspect of U.S. culture lies in "habits of the heart" (i.e., the internalization of democratic values and the manifestation of such ideas in everyday life). ALEXIS DE TOQUEVILLE, DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA 128 (Sanford Kessler ed. & Stephen D. Grant trans., 2000) (original work published in 1835). Although a democratic *political system* is an important—and still evolving—achievement, the truly remarkable dimension of U.S. life was (even in the 19th century) and is a democratic *culture*:

> Americans of all ages, all conditions, and all minds constantly unite together. Not only do they have commercial and industrial associations in which all take part, but they also have a thousand other types: religious, moral, solemn, frivolous, very general and very particular, immense and very small. The Americans form associations in order to hold holiday celebrations, found seminaries, build hostels, erect churches, disseminate books, and send missionaries to the ends of the earth; in this manner they create hospitals,

> prisons, and schools. Finally, if it is a question of bringing a truth to light or developing a sentiment with the aid of a great example, they form associations....
>
> I have come across types of associations in America that I confess I did not even conceive of, and I have often admired the infinite art with which the inhabitants of the United States succeed in establishing a common goal for a great number of men and in making them march toward it voluntarily.

Id. at 211.

These observations clarify the threat to U.S. culture that the decline in social capital poses. The accompanying text indicates further that the risk is especially acute for children and families.

[124]*See, e.g.,* ROBERT D. PUTNAM, MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK: CIVIC TRADITIONS IN MODERN ITALY (1995); Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital,* 6(1) J. DEMOCRACY 65 (1995).

[125]*See generally* ROBERT A. DAHL, ON DEMOCRACY (2000).

[126]*See generally* June L. Tapp & Gary B. Melton, *Preparing Children for Decision Making: Implications of Legal Socialization Research, in* CHILDREN'S COMPETENCE TO CONSENT 215 (Gary B. Melton et al. eds., 1983).

[127]Gary B. Melton, *Democratization and Children's Lives, in* GLOBALIZATION AND CHILDREN: EXPLORING POTENTIALS FOR ENHANCING OPPORTUNITIES IN THE LIVES OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH 47 (Natalie Hevener Kaufman & Irene Rizzini eds., 2002).

[128]*See generally* Robert L. Sampson et al., *Neighborhoods and Collective Efficacy: A Multilevel Study of Collective Efficacy,* 277 SCI. 918 (1997).

[129]Moncrieff M. Cochran & Jane A. Brassard, *Child Development and Personal Social Networks,* 50 CHILD DEV. 601 (1979).

[130]Coaches who focus on enhancement of personal performance rather than team competition elicit greater skill development and better sustained motivation. Even just a three-hour workshop aimed at helping coaches to reward personal effort can build sustainable increases in children's self-esteem and reductions in their performance anxiety. Reed W. Larson, *Toward a Psychology of Positive Youth Development*, 55 AM. PSYCHOLOGIST 170, 179-80 (2000).

[131]Desmond K. Runyan et al., *Children Who Prosper in Unfavorable Environments: The Relationship to Social Capital,* 101 PEDIATRICS 12 (1998).

[132]*Id.*

[133]Jean M. Twenge, *The Age of Anxiety? Birth Cohort Change in Anxiety and Neuroticism, 1952-1993,* 79 J. PERSONALITY & SOC. PSYCHOL. 1007 (2000).

[134]MARTIN E. P. SELIGMAN ET AL., THE OPTIMISTIC CHILD (1995).

[135]Richard Eckersley, *Science, Suicide, and the Self,* 23 DIALOGUE [J. ACAD. SOC. SCIS. AUSTRALIA 88 (2004); Richard Eckersley & Keith Dear, *Cultural Correlates of Youth Suicide,* 55 SOC. SCI. & MED. 1891 (2002).

[136]SELIGMAN, *supra* note 134, at 42 (footnote omitted).
[137]SCHNEIDER & STEVENSON, *supra* note 95.
[138]*Id.* at 5.
[139]*Id.* at 7.
[140]*Id. at* 76-78.
[141]*Id.* at 7-8.
[142]*See supra* note 94.
[143]*See supra* notes 97-101 & 112 and accompanying text.
[144]*Id.* at 8.
[145]*Id.*
[146]ENGAGING SCHOOLS, *supra* note 10, at 18.
[147]Larson, *supra* note 130.
[148]*Id.* at 170.
[149]*Id.* at 2.
[150]*Id.*; IMPROVING STUDENT LEARNING, supra note 25, at 30. Reflecting the lack of peer reinforcement for intellectual achievement, most American high school students say that they could do much better in school if they tried. *Id.*
[151]*Id.* at 45-46.
[152]Jacquelyn S. Eccles et al., *Development During Adolescence: The Impact of Stage-Environment Fit on Young Adolescents' Experiences in Schools and in Families,* 48 AM. PSYCHOLOGIST 90, 93-94 & 96 (1993).
[153]The mismatch between teacher expectations and adolescents' desire for increasing autonomy—not puberty per se—accounts for precipitous reduction in students' involvement in school and the related increase in depression and various social problems among early adolescents. Hence, higher achievement is found in classrooms in which teachers are confident in their ability to teach in secondary schools. *Id.* at 95-96. As historical evidence also indicates, adolescent *Sturm und Drang* is the product of the organization of community institutions, especially the schools, much more than hormonal change or some other intrinsic developmental phenomenon. *See, e.g.*, JOSEPH F. KETT, RITES OF PASSAGE: ADOLESCENCE IN AMERICA, 1790 TO THE PRESENT (1977).

The impersonality of many secondary schools is also discouraging for school staff. Middle school teachers are more inclined toward job dissatisfaction and personal depression than are their colleagues in other settings. Eccles et al., *supra*, at 93 & 95. Teachers who translate their own unhappiness into a lack of social support for students have less success and thus confirm their own expectations. *Id.* at 95-96.
[154]ENGAGING SCHOOLS, *supra* note 10, at 19.
[155]For a careful analysis of the relative power of various factors in the decline of social capital, see generally PUTNAM, *supra* note 113.
[156]ENGAGING SCHOOLS, *supra* note 10, at 6 & 113-18. Although public policy has been slow to catch up, the strongly relationship between school size and student engagement is a classic finding in social science research. *See, e.g.,* ROGER BARKER & PAUL GUMP, BIG SCHOOL, SMALL SCHOOL: HIGH SCHOOL SIZE AND STUDENT BEHAVIOR (1964).

[157]EAGER TO LEARN, *supra* note 12, at 146.

[158]*Id.* at 218. The phenomenon in which student participation is "demanded" by a setting in which there are not enough students to fill all of the critical roles is called *undermanning. See* BARKER & GUMP, *supra* note 155.

The only disadvantage of smaller schools from students' perspective is less opportunity to "specialize" (e.g., to sing in the general school choir and an a capella group; to play in the band and a jazz ensemble; to take a course in music theory). *Id.* Further, this advantage is likely to be important only to students who excel in a particular domain but who are not interested in multiple activities.

Otherwise, not only is it hard for students to become "lost" in a small school, but they are also apt to have many more opportunities for intrinsically interesting activities. There is, after all, virtually the same number of positions on the track team, the same number of offices in student government, the same number of speakers on the debate team, and the same number of roles in a school play, regardless of the size of the student body.

[159]IMPROVING STUDENT LEARNING, supra note 25, at 41 (citations omitted).

[160]*See* ENGAGING SCHOOLS, *supra* note 10, at 90-93 (noting in particular the importance of professional collaboration in an atmosphere of personal respect).

[161]ENGAGING SCHOOLS, *supra* note 10, at 159-60. *See also* IMPROVING STUDENT LEARNING, supra note 25, at 35 (discussing the link between academic motivation and school relationships).

[162]Improvement of the teacher-pupil ratio is also not a magic way to solve the problem of a school's impersonal environment. *See supra* note 157 and accompanying text.

[163]ENGAGING SCHOOLS, *supra* note 10, at 160.

[164]*Id.* at 157.

[165]*Id.* at 222.

[166]*Id.* at 100-03. An atmosphere of interpersonal trust is especially important. *Id.* at 102-03.

[167]*Id.* at 149.

[168]*Id.* at 2-3.

[169]Such benefits probably flow in multiple directions. The experience of working with engaged students is apt to be satisfying and maybe even instructive for adults in the community, who are likely to become more supportive of the school and its staff. Such experiences may also reduce negative stereotypes about adolescents.

[170]ENGAGING SCHOOLS, *supra* note 10, at 2-3.

[171]*Id.* at 48.

[172]*See* CHOICE AND PERCEIVED CONTROL (Lawrence C. Perlmuter & Richard A. Monty eds., 1979); EDWARD L. DECI & RICHARD M. RYAN, INTRINSIC MOTIVATION AND SELF-DETERMINATION IN HUMAN BEHAVIOR (1985).

[173]ENGAGING SCHOOLS, *supra* note 10, at 52.

[174]*Id.* at 53; *see, e.g.*, Tom R. Tyler & Peter Degoey, *Community, Family, and the Social Good: The Psychological Dynamics of Procedural Justice and Social Identification, in* 42 NEB. SYMP. ON MOTIVATION: THE INDIVIDUAL, THE FAMILY, AND SOCIAL GOOD: PERSONAL FULFILLMENT IN TIMES OF CHANGE 53 (Gary B. Melton ed., 1995).

[175]Choice and relationships matter. Consider, for example, the energy that one puts into a task—perhaps working unusually hard to squeeze time to ensure that it is completed promptly—when one is asked to undertake a particular project by someone who is a personal mentor.

[176]For an analysis of the experiences that are important in children's socialization as citizens, see Tapp & Melton, *supra* note 128.

The need to enhance young people's civic engagement is noted through much of this report. However, there is no more fundamental exemplar of this principle than voter turnout. Although the trajectory of voting rates shifted from its long-time downward slide in the 2004 presidential election, for young voters (18- to 29-year-olds) the rationale for going to the polls often was intense dislike for one candidate or the other (83%, compared with 46% of voters 30 and older), not a renewed faith in government. Thomas E. Patterson, Young Voters and the 2004 Election 5 (Feb. 2, 2005) (final report of the Vanishing Voter Project, Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics, and Public Policy, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University). Young adults continued to vote at much lower rates than older voters. For the 2004 election, four out of five citizens aged 65 or older but only three of five citizens aged 18 to 24 were registered. Mike Bergman, U.S. Voter Turnout Up in 2004, Census Bureau Reports (May 26, 2005) (U.S. Census Bureau press release). Fewer than one-half of citizens aged 18 to 24 reported actually voting, compared with about 70% of those aged 45 or older. *Id.* For the presidential elections between 1980 and 2000, at least two-thirds of citizens aged 45 or older reported voting—in contrast with about two-fifths of 18- to 20-year-olds and one-half of 21 to 24-year-olds. U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, STATISTICAL ABSTRACT OF THE UNITED STATES: 2004-2005 256 (Table No. 407). For congressional elections during that period, about two-thirds of citizens aged 45 or older reported voting—twice as many as 18- to 20-year-olds throughout the two decades and 21- to 24-year-olds in 1998. *Id.* The young adult (18- to 24-year-old) voting rate has never exceeded the 52% rate in 1972, the first election after enactment of the Twenty-sixth Amendment extended the vote to 18- to 20-year-olds. David E. Campbell, *Vote Early, Vote Often*, EDUC. NEXT, Summer 2005, at 62, 62.

Although exposure to the formal civics curriculum makes no difference in students' ultimate voting behavior, the "hidden curriculum"—the school's civic culture—has a large effect. (Thus the accompanying text emphasizes students' *experience*, not the didactic instruction to which they are exposed.) Whether an individual attended a school where there was a strong political consensus (regardless of whether that individual now lives in a cohesive community) strongly affects whether that individual will vote 15 years later, even when controls are added for the social background (e.g., parents' education) of the students. *Id.* at 65-70.

In the same vein, schools become "engaging" in part because of the multiplicative effect of students' experience that teachers and adults in the community at large listen to them and treat

them as *people* who are members of the community. The resulting sense of civic responsibility becomes part of students' expectations for each other. ENGAGING SCHOOLS, *supra* note 10, at 137-38. *Cf.* Gary B. Melton, *Building Humane Communities Respectful of Children: The Significance of the Convention on the Rights of the Child*, 60 AM. PSYCHOLOGIST ___ (2005) (discussing the nature and effects of treating children like people).

[177]ENGAGING SCHOOLS, *supra* note 10, at 48.

[178]*Id.* at 127. *See generally* COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY-LEVEL PROGRAMS FOR YOUTH, AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS TO PROMOTE CHILD AND ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT (2000) [hereinafter AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS] (report of a workshop sponsored by a committee of the National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine) (describing possible characteristics of effective after-school programs and discussing the current positive political environment for such programs, with interest of both governmental agencies and private foundations). *Cf.* ENGAGING SCHOOLS, *supra* note 10, at 214 (recommending that school districts adopt a strategy of "creating schools or small learning communities (clusters or "majors") that have particular academic (e.g., the performing arts, science and math, environmental issues) or occupational (e.g., health occupations, business, biotechnology) foci that capitalize on students' personal interests and connect to the world outside the school while maintaining high academic standards).

[179]AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS, *supra* note 178, at 11-12.

[180]Jacquelyn Eccles et al., *Extracurricular Activities and Adolescent Development,* 59(4) J. SOC. ISSUES 865 (2003).

[181]AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS, *supra* note 178, at 10-12.

[182]*See id.* at 10-12 (describing the Valued Youth Partnership Program in San Antonio).

[183]*See* FRANK REISSMAN & DAVID CARROLL, REDEFINING SELF-HELP IN THE HUMAN SERVICES: POLICY AND PRACTICE (1995).

[184]*See* Gary B. Melton & Susan P. Limber, *What Rights Mean to Children: Children's Own Views, in* IDEOLOGIES OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS 167 (Michael Freeman & Phillip Veerman eds., 1992). The essays of Robert Coles provide vivid examples of the political and spiritual sensibility of even elementary-school-age children. *See, e.g.,* ROBERT COLES, THE POLITICAL LIFE OF CHILDREN (1999).

[185]CHRISTENSON & SHERIDAN, *supra* note 1, at 50-51.

[186]Sandra L. Christenson, *Families and Schools: What Is the Role of the School Psychologist?,* 10 SCHOOL PSYCHOL. Q. 118 (1995).

[187]*See* Melton et al., *supra* note 23, at 184-86, and citations therein.

[188]Parent Involvement Task Force, *supra* note 44, at 7.

[189]Parents Survey, *supra* note 58.

[190]Jean M. Norman & Emily P. Smith, *Families and Schools, Islands Unto Themselves: Opportunities to Construct Bridges*, 1(1) FAM. FUTURES 5 (1997).

[191]Melton et al., *supra* note 23, at 186-87, and citations therein. Parents perceive their work schedules to be by far the biggest obstacle to their enhanced participation in the schools. Melton, *supra* note 120, at 20.

[192]Christine M. Hoxby, *If Families Matter Most, Where Do Schools Come In?, in* A PRIMER ON AMERICA'S SCHOOLS 89 (Terry M. Moe ed., 2001).

[193]*Id.* at 103.

[194]Norman & Smith, *supra* note 190.

[195]Parents Survey, *supra* note 58, at 22.

[196]Melton et al., *supra* note 23, at 186, and citations therein.

[197]*Id.*

[198]CHRISTENSON & SHERIDAN, *supra* note 1, at 50 (citing research on the National Assessment of Educational Progress).

[199]*Id.* (citing a speech in 1995).

[200]J. Douglas Roddick & Scott W. Henggeler, *The Short-term and Long-term Amelioration of Academic and Motivational Deficiencies Among Low-Achieving Inner-City Adolescents*, 51 CHILD DEV. 1126 (1980).

[201]MATHEWS, supra note 66, at 18.

[202]*Id.* at 23-24.

[203]CHRISTENSON & SHERIDAN, *supra* note 1, at 37-38.

[204]*Id.* at 26-27.

[205]*Id.* at 43-45.

[206]For other examples, see the suggestions at www.partnershipschools.org by the Johns Hopkins University group led by Joyce Epstein. Related ideas can be found on the Web site of the National Parents-Teachers Association, www.pta.org. Although working independently, Sandra Christenson and her colleagues at the University of Minnesota and other Midwestern universities have elaborated the dynamics of family-school relations in a manner highly consistent with the conceptualization that Prof. Epstein and her colleagues.

For their complementary groundbreaking work, Profs. Christenson and Epstein were selected as co-winners of the 2005 Ittleson Award by the American Orthopsychiatric Association, of which the author of this paper is president. The 2006 winner is perhaps the most influential leader in research and public service on community-school-family relations, Edward F. Zigler of Yale University. Profs. Christenson, Epstein, and Zigler will join the author and Diane J. Willis of the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, a founder of pediatric psychology and a leader in development of services for Native American children, especially in the Head Start system, in invited lectures to Ortho's annual meeting as part of the Cape Cod Institute in Eastham, Massachusetts, in June 2006.

[207]Christenson, supra note 50, at 153.

[208]*See* Kathleen Wilson & Gary B. Melton, *Exemplary Neighborhood-Based Child Protection Programs, in* TOWARD A CHILD-CENTERED, NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM 197 (Gary B. Melton et al. eds., 2002).

[209]*About Family Support*, http://www.familysupportamerica.org/content/aboutus.htm (n.d.).

[210]*Id.*

[211]*See* Gary B. Melton, *Family Centers Are the Heart of Community*, GREENVILLE NEWS, Jan. 14, 2001, at 3F; Gary B. Melton et al., The Development and Current Status of Family Resource Centers in Greenville County (2001) (report to United Way of Greenville County).

[212]Although it is still a rather young organization (less than a decade old), The Golden Strip Center in Simpsonville is the best example that I have seen of a family resource center, whether inside or outside South Carolina, that strives to be truly community-based in its governance, feel, and programs. *See* http://www.clemson.edu/ifnl/gscenter.

[213]*See, e.g.*, JONATHAN COHEN & JAMES P. COMER, CARING CLASSROOMS/INTELLIGENT SCHOOLS: THE SOCIAL EMOTIONAL EDUCATION OF YOUNG CHILDREN (2001); JAMES P. COMER, LEAVE NO CHILD BEHIND: PREPARING TODAY'S YOUTH FOR TOMORROW'S WORLD (2004); JAMES P. COMER ET AL., CHILD BY CHILD: THE COMER PROCESS FOR EDUCATION (1999); JAMES P. COMER ET AL., RALLYING THE WHOLE SCHOOL: THE COMER PROCESS FOR EDUCATION (1996); SIX PATHWAYS TO ACADEMIC SUCCESS: THE FIELD GUIDE TO COMER SCHOOLS IN ACTION (Michael Ben-Avie et al. eds., 2004); Edward F. Zigler et al., *Meeting the Needs of Children and Families with Schools of the 21st Century*, 10 YALE L. & POL. REV. 69 (1992); Edward F. Zigler et al., *Supporting Children and Families in the Schools: The School of the 21st Century*, 67 AM. J. ORTHOPSYCHIATRY (1997). Descriptions of the School Development Program (Comer schools) and Schools of the 21st Century (Zigler schools), news about related training, and references to relevant research can be found by clicking on the pertinent hyperlinks at http://info.med.yale.edu/chldstdy/community/index.html.

[214]*See supra* note 37.

[215]Educational policymakers in South Carolina have recognized this point. Establishing recommendations based on a *vision* for family-school-community relations, the Parent Involvement Task Force, *supra* note 44, perceptively identified *leadership* as the critical ingredient in transforming schools to be more responsive to parents and the community as a whole. *Id.* at 3. The other findings and recommendations of the task force also related to creation of a climate for parent involvement, not adoption of particular programs, by establishing a state priority for multi-faceted action.

[216]Youth-directed community service is the only context in which there has been empirical demonstration that young people both enjoy what they are doing and perceive their activity to be of their own volition. Larson, *supra* note 130, at 174.

[217]In the Strong Communities initiative, described *supra* note 37, more than 3,000 volunteers were recruited in southern Greenville County in three years. Interestingly, even though no special effort was made to include young people, about 1 in 9 of the volunteers are under 20. In a community-wide initiative, young people naturally have done their part as residents of the community. *See* Asher Ben-Arieh et al., The Feasibility of Community-wide Mobilization for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (manuscript in preparation).

[218]Unfortunately, social studies curricula are generally not well designed to accomplish such objectives. Judith Torney-Purta et al., *Mapping the Distinctive and Common Features of Civic Education in Twenty-Four Countries*, *in* CIVIC EDUCATION ACROSS COUNTRIES: TWENTY-FOUR NATIONAL CASE STUDIES FROM THE IEA CIVIC EDUCATION PROJECT 11, 30 (Judith Torney-Purta et al. eds., 1999). *See also* Carole L. Hahn, *Challenges to Civic Education in the United States*, *in* CIVIC EDUCATION, *supra*, at 583 (discussing social studies teachers' complaints that their efforts to teach about diversity, civil liberties, etc. are often impeded by school policies that result in student experiences that are inconsistent with the lessons in the formal curriculum).

[219]This perspective has been well developed, with practice guides and related research, training, and technical assistance by the UCLA School Mental Health Project, which is co-directed by psychologists Howard S. Adelman and Linda Taylor. *See* http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu.

[220]ENGAGING SCHOOLS, *supra* note 10, at 221.

[221]LISBETH B. SCHORR, COMMON PURPOSE: STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND NEIGHBORHOODS TO REBUILD AMERICA 420 (1999).

[222]Recognizing the critical importance of education for such a purpose, the South Carolina Constitution provides that "the General Assembly shall provide for the maintenance and support of a system of free public schools open to all children in the State and shall establish, organize and support such other public institutions of learning, as may be desirable." S.C. CONST. ANN. art. XI, § 3 (2004) . The South Carolina Supreme Court has held that a "minimally adequate education" under the state constitution includes "providing students adequate and safe facilities in which they have the opportunity to acquire: (1) the ability to read, write, and speak the English language, and knowledge of mathematics and physical science; (2) a fundamental knowledge of economic, social, and political systems, and of history and governmental processes; and (3) academic and vocational skills." Abbeville County School Dist. v. State, 335 S.C. 58, 68, 515 S.E.2d 535, 540 (1999). Although the court held that the right to education under the state constitution extends only to basic education, the court did not offer an explanation of its determination of the elements so protected.

[223]Meyer v. Neb., 262 U.S. 390, 401 (1923).

[224]Brown v. Bd. of Educ., 347 U.S. 483, 493 (1954) (emphasis added).

[225]ENGAGING SCHOOLS, *supra* note 10, at 80 & 146.

[226]EAGER TO LEARN, *supra* note 12, at 162-64.

[227]*See supra* note 110.

[228]THOMAS D. SNYDER ET AL., DIGEST OF EDUCATION STATISTICS, 2003 (Dec. 2004) (Report No. NCES 2005-025), at 179 (Table 147).

[229]SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE, REPORT CARD FOR 2004, at 5.

[230]SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE, ANNUAL STATISTICAL REPORT, 2003-04, at 19.

[231]*Id.*

[232]*Id.* at 25.

[233]*Id.* at 1.

[234]ENGAGING SCHOOLS, *supra* note 10, at 27.

[235]ROBERT D. PUTNAM & LEWIS M. FELDSTEIN, BETTER TOGETHER: RESTORING THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY 294 (2003).